THE HINDU PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT.

BHAGAVADGĪTĀ.

THE HINDU PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT

BEING CLASS-LECTURES ON THE

BHAGAVADGĪTĀ

BY

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To

REV. WILLIAM MILLER, M.A., LL.D., D.D., C.I.E.,

FORMERLY PRINCIPAL OF THE MADRAS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE,

FROM WHOSE INSTRUCTION AND EXAMPLE

I DERIVED MUCH GUIDANCE AND INSPIRATION IN EARLY LIFE,

I DEDICATE THESE LECTURES,

AS A HUMBLE TOKEN OF MY GRATITUDE, ESTEEM AND LOVE.

PREFACE.

As a humble worker in the field of modern Indian education in Southern India, I was in a position to discern, early enough in my career as an educator, that the system of modern Indian education, organised by the British Indian Government mainly in accordance with the principles enunciated by Macaulay—a system which has had to be necessarily secular in character and European in spirit and aim—cannot be considered to have produced in its Indian atmosphere results that may be taken to be altogether good and flawless. That system has undoubtedly tended to widen the vision of Indian thought and to give to it a freer and a fuller scope than ever it had before in its long history extending over thousands of years: it has offered to the Indian mind for acceptance and assimilation much new material of great intellectual and moral value: and—what is even more—it has opened out for Indian students and thinkers wide vistas of attractive enterprise in the direction of research, criticism and constructive synthesis in the limitless fields of modern science and progressive humanitarian culture in all its varied aspects. Nevertheless, since modern Indian education has had to be so largely European in spirit and aim, it has inevitably produced a yawning gulf between the imported new thought and the indigenous historic life of the people with its ancient sanctions and sacred traditions. Where the growth of thought is from native roots, there both thought

and life progress together, whatever may be the amount of alien culture-elements that are received with welcome feelings and appropriated freely from time to time; the practical needs of life and the advancing potency of the people propel thought here along its progressive course, and thought in its onward movement so tells upon life as to make it also consistently progressive. Such, however, cannot be the case where exotic thought and indigenous life are brought into mutual relation by force of circumstances like those prevailing now in India; the exotic higher thought of modern English-educated India receives as little stimulation and sustenance from the life and potency of the Indian people as their life itself is influenced in its really vital parts by this outer higher thought. It is an imperative need of the hour in the history of modern India to have this gulf between thought and life bridged securely and well as soon as possible, as, otherwise, the numerous evil consequences due to their unnatural separation are certain to undermine the very foundations of social stability and moral order. There is ample evidence to indicate that this need is being keenly felt all over the country in innumerable sensitive centres that are generously responsive to exalted ideals of patriotism and public welfare; and one of the forms, in which the patriotic activity of those centres has been very naturally making itself manifest, has consisted largely in an earnest endeavour to bring together and harmonise by means of suitable and accurate interpretation and exposition the old thought of the East with the new thought of the West, so that they may as early as possible become fused into one wisdom. The possibility of accomplishing a thing like this need not be

questioned, because the ultimate oneness of truth demands that all its many aspects should be consistent with one another. These lectures on the *Bhagavadgītā* have been intended to serve as a humble contribution towards the fulfilment of this high purpose of thought-harmonisation; and it is certainly needless to point out that this is an undoubtedly ambitious aim, the very entertainment of which requires more than ample justification. I have, however, felt in the circumstance that even the evident ridiculousness of the over-high ambition of the weak person is not in itself enough to make that ambition of his entirely inexcusable.

The religious neutrality of the British Indian Government is responsible for its system of education in India being markedly secular in character. The necessities of the Indian situation having rightly dictated to the Government its policy of religious neutrality, and the religion of the British people being different from the religions that have for long been followed by the Indian people with true faith and warm earnestness, the organisation of modern Indian education could not but be made to rest as largely as possible on a secular and rationalistic basis. This rigid limitation imposed upon the scope of the foundation has made the system of education erected thereon not only incomplete but also productive of certain results that are often apt to be unfavourably criticised. To exclude the study of religion as largely as possible from the field of liberal education is really to make it narrow and illiberal by withholding therefrom the operation of the chiefest and the most powerful among humanitarian influences upon the development

of thought and the formation of character; and the complaint is not unoften heard that, in the British-organised system of modern education in India, the tendency in all its stages from the lowest to the highest is to encourage a too free rationalism and a leaning to self-assertion at the expense of faith and obedience, and to give too great a prominence to the conceptions of rights and privileges so as thereby to throw into the back-ground the corresponding corrective conceptions of duties and obligations. This complaint against the type of character that is being encouraged by the modern system of Indian education has been for some time very general, and has been put forward by friends and foes alike of that system in India and elsewhere. Many Hindus, who have themselves received the modern liberal education imparted by the Indian Universities, are of opinion that the complaint cannot be said to be unfounded; and to Hindus of the old-school-culture in India, no system of education, which encourages prematurely rationalistic self-assertion in preference to due obedience to accepted authority, is likely to appear to be good and praiseworthy. It cannot of course be denied that it is quite equally possible to make a system of education possess too marked a leaning on the side of ready-made faith and unquestioning obedience to authority; and this error in educational organisation is indeed no less unwholesome than the other error on the opposite side, in so far as the evolution of what may be looked upon as the perfect type of culture and character is concerned. To encourage the growth of culture and establish the harmony of life between faith, duty, obligation and obedience, on the one side, and reason, liberty

privilege and personal conviction, on the other side, can never be anywhere an easy task; and no endeavour to bring into existence such an intellectual and moral harmony and make it flourish well in society and in individual life can safely afford to neglect the aid, which a generously conceived course of religious and moral instruction, as forming a part of liberal education, is calculated to give in the matter. Those, that are not sincerely convinced of the inviolability of the moral law and the naturally consequent imperative obligatoriness of morality, will rarely try to see that the above-mentioned kind of intellectual and moral harmony is established in their own lives; and this required conviction can be built up on no surer foundation than the ultimate facts and principles of religion. For the purpose of imparting general non-sectarian religious and moral instruction, in accordance with the ordinarily accepted principles of Hinduism, to such Hindus as are desirous of rounding off therewith their modern liberal education, no better text-book can be found than the *Bhagavadgītā*, which is rightly famous as a unique philosophical poem of sublime value in the whole range of human literature. To all believing Hindus, it is a holy work of recognised scriptural authority, and all its religious and moral injunctions are the mandates of God. Accordingly, another object kept in view in relation to these lectures on the *Bhagavadgītā* was to make them serve as a comprehensive exposition of the Hindu philosophy of conduct, which is noted for its well-reasoned and well-balanced adjustment between the various egoistic and altruistic impulses involved in the moral and spiritual life of human individuals and the historic welfare and progress of human communities.

The standpoint, from which these lectures were delivered, was naturally that of a believer in Hinduism addressing a class of believing Hindus, although all such Hindus and non-Hindus as chose to attend them were freely allowed to do so without any hindrance of any kind. In fact, one of the conditions, on which the delivery of the lectures was undertaken, was that admission should be made free and easy to all those who wanted to attend them. Many Hindus of all sects and some non-Hindus also attended them; and all of them appeared to be really interested in what was being expounded in the classes. It is needless to say that the standpoint of the believer adopted in relation to these lectures has not been the same as the standpoint of uncritical credulity; and it is believed that a perusal of the lectures will of itself show that they are throughout sympathetically critical, and that their chief aim has been to bring to light the continuity of reasoning and the consistency of thought found in relation to all the important teachings contained in the *Bhagavadgītā*. It cannot, however, be denied that there are certain educated and highly cultured persons, to whom to criticise means unfortunately the same thing as to find out flaws. Censorious persons of this description are certainly not likely to feel satisfied with the spirit of these lectures; and what has to be said to them is that the lectures were not addressed to secure their approval or satisfaction. Readers of this volume may observe that the lectures in it are not all of uniform length, some of them being short and others considerably longer; and this is due to the fact that, in keeping with the nature of the subject-matter, the temper and enthusiasm of the audience and

the warmth and vigour of the lecturer on the occasion, the time of delivery of the lectures varied from class to class from one to two hours, and that they have all been, for publication in this volume, largely reproduced with the aid of the short-hand notes taken at the time of their oral delivery to the classes. The short-hand notes have been subjected to considerable pruning and other similar processes involved in what is commonly known as 'editing', so that the spoken speech may be made to approach the written language in manner to some small extent. Extra repetitions and super-abundant explanations are often found to be very helpful in oral expositions; but they are apt to overburden the printed page. Extreme verbal simplicity and colloquiality and certain well-recognised forms of laxness in syntax tend to make the comprehension of the meaning of the uttered sentence easy; but such language mars too much the dignity of the written style. Excepting the changes due to these and other such considerations, and excepting also a few additions and improvements here and there, intended to make the meaning clearer and the reasoning fuller, the lectures have been on the whole made to agree with the short-hand notes; and the ideas and principles enunciated in the course of the successive class-expositions have accordingly been allowed to remain intact. In translating the Sanskrit stanzas of the *Gītā*, care has been taken to see that the translation is as near to the original as possible, and that at the same time no serious injury of any kind is done in consequence to the genius of the English language. Such additional words and expressions, as have been needed to make the translation full, clear and accurate, are introduced within brackets; and if

the translated passages are read without these added words and expressions, their literalness becomes in most cases easily evident. In the original Sanskrit of the *Bhagavadgītā*, various differently significant names and epithets are used in mentioning Śrī-Kṛishṇa and Arjuna; and in most cases the significations of these different names and epithets have not been specifically brought out in the translation, these personages being mentioned in almost all cases simply as Śrī-Kṛishṇa and Arjuna. Another point, which requires to be noted, is that, in accordance with an extensively current usage, the *Bhagavadgītā* has very frequently been spoken of as the *Gītā* in the comments constituting the lectures. Indeed, among the philosophical 'songs' of this kind known to Sanskrit literature, the *Bhagavadgītā* is pre-eminently the best and in every way deserves to be known as the *Gītā*.

It may also be observed that every succeeding lecture is almost invariably made to begin with a brief resume of the previous lecture; this has necessarily tended to give rise to some amount of repetition of ideas and thoughts in the lectures. In this respect, the practice followed in the course of the actual delivery of the lectures has not been departed from, in the belief that the repetition of the ideas and thoughts thus allowed to remain is likely to prove helpful to the proper understanding and appreciation of the meaning of the *Gītā*. Similarly, at the conclusion of every chapter, the teachings given in it have been summarised fairly exhaustively, with the object of presenting those teachings in their natural as well as rational relationship to one another, so that thereby their

general comprehension may be made clearer and more complete than it would otherwise be. This again, has become responsible for a further repetition of ideas and thoughts, although in this latter case special attention has been directed to the elucidation of the course and continuity of the reasoning by which the various teachings are supported and established to be good and true. The uniquely sublime character of the philosophical worthiness and religious authority of the *Bhagavadgītā* is well-known to be so marked and note-worthy as to demand a high level of thought in all those, who earnestly endeavour to understand that famous poem aright; and none will therefore take up with a light heart the seriously responsible work of expounding it to classes consisting of earnest and thoughtful students, unless the force impelling him to do it happens to be too powerful to be effectively resisted. For years together, I had somehow been led to entertain a strong desire to see if I could produce some work that might prove to be of use in making a course of general non-sectarian religious and moral teaching in Hindu Schools and Colleges on strictly Hindu lines easier and more possible than it had been ordinarily understood to be; and an attempt was being made by me to bring out under the name of *Vēdā-Vēdānta-Saṅgraha*, a collection of suitable selections from the extensive range of Hindu scriptures with translation and notes, so as to exhibit in it the historical development of the Hindu Religion and present at the same time all its important teachings and doctrines in a convenient compass. It was then that Mr. C. P. Anantanārāyaṇa Aiyar, who was one of the Secretaries of the *Śrī-Pārthasārathi-Svāmi-Sabhā*

in Triplicane, began to put steady pressure on me to agree to expound the *Bhagavadgītā* to classes held under the auspices of that *Sabhā*. To the persistency of his pressure I had to yield, and in doing so I hoped that the proposed exposition of the *Gītā* might enable me to carry out in a manner my long cherished desire to do some work of a helpful kind in relation to the general religious and moral instruction of Hindu youth on Hindu lines. The delivery of the lectures—in all eighty-seven in number—took more than two years, as they were given week after week on Sundays for about nine months or so in the year; and the thought of the *Vēdā-Vēdānta-Saṅgraha* had to be given up in consequence. The revision and the printing of the lectures has taken a very long time, partly owing to my having had much heavy and pressing work of other kinds to do, partly owing to my failing health, and in no small part owing to the very great delay caused in the Oriental Press, to which the printing of the lectures was entrusted by the *Śrī-Pārthasārathi-Svāmi-Sabhā;* and in this first volume, covering the first six, out of the eighteen, chapters of the *Gītā*, only thirty-one lectures are included. The requisite work of 'editing' is being carried on in connection with the remaining lectures, with a view to have them published in two more volumes as early as possible. What the usefulness of these lectures is, and how far I am justified in having them brought out in book-form, are things about which I can be no correct judge; and yet I consider it but proper to state that I have felt proud of the opportunity I have had to deliver them. Such an opportunity came to me mainly through my having been appointed as Professor of Sanskrit and

Comparative Philology in the Presidency College at Madras by Lord Ampthill, when His Lordship was Governor of Fort St. George; and whatever may be the judgment of competent critics on the value of this exposition of the *Bhagavadgītā*, there can be no doubt that I am bound to be highly grateful to His Lordship for his having made it possible for me to try to serve my countrymen thus. Accordingly, I offer here my most sincere and heart-felt thanks to His Lordship. Similar thanks are due from me to the members of the *Śrī-Pārthasārathi-Svāmi-Sabhā*—and particularly to its Secretaries—for their having worked in so many ways in behalf of the classes week after week and arranged to supply me with the short-hand notes of the class-lectures: and to them also I offer my equally sincere and heart-felt thanks.

TRIPLICANE, MADRAS:
7th November, 1914.

M. RANGACHARYA.

PREFATORY NOTE TO THE REPRINT.

WHEN it occurred to me some months ago, that it was desirable to bring out these lectures on the *Bhagavad-gītā* in three volumes, so that the first, second and third volumes might contain respectively the lectures relating to the first, second and third six chapters of the entire work of eighteen chapters, I felt that the first volume, for which all the required matter had been ready for a long time, should be issued without any more delay. To carry out this intention, it became necessary to have the lectures—so far as they were ready—reprinted on my own responsibility, and to depend no longer upon the *Śrī-Pārthasārathi-Svāmi-Sabhā* for their publication. Accordingly, I got them reprinted; and in the reprint the alterations made on revision are mostly of a verbal character, and the lectures as contained in this volume do not in any material respect differ from what they are in the fasciculi already issued by the *Śrī-Pārtha-sārathi-Svāmi-Sabhā.* It is commonly known that each of the three groups, consisting of the first, second and third six chapters of the *Bhagavadgītā*, forms a whole in itself; and the first six chapters are naturally well suited to serve as an introduction to the study of the complete work. They give not only the ground-plan of the philosophy of conduct, which is built up and expounded therein, but also the teachings bearing upon

self-realisation as leading to God-realisation and to the authoritative formulation of the ethical law of universal equality as constituting the most appropriate guide to the conduct of human life. This law is shown besides to be based fully on realised truth, and to include within its grasp both the law of duty and the law of love, so as to make courage and compassion as well as self-sacrifice and service imperatively obligatory in the morally well-conducted life of all human communities and individuals. It is believed that the study of the Hindu philosophy of conduct even thus far cannot but be interesting and instructive.

TRIPLICANE, MADRAS:
8th January, 1915.

M. RANGACHARYA.

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THE

PHILOSOPHY OF CONDUCT ACCORDING TO THE RELIGION OF THE HINDUS:

BEING

AN EXPOSITION

OF THE

BHAGAVADGĪTĀ.

यो नित्यो यमुपासतेऽखिलजना येनेदमावास्यते
यस्मै कर्म करोति सात्त्विककुलं यस्माज्जगज्जायते ।
यस्यैश्वर्यमवेद्यनैजविभवं यस्मिन् हि विश्वं स्थितं
तं दूरे पुनरन्तिकेऽपि विदितं ध्यायामि नारायणम् ॥

GENTLEMEN,

Before I proceed with the work of expounding the *Bhagavadgītā* to you, I wish to be permitted to offer a few words of personal explanation. It is not because I feel that I am in any way specially fitted to explain to you the sublime lessons of wisdom and philosophy which are contained in the *Bhagavadgītā*, that I have made bold to accept the high responsibility of expounding to you that philosophical poem, which has been most appropriately described by an English translator of it as the 'Song Celestial' with the insight of a true poet and philosopher. My main object in venturing to bear this responsibility is to see, if even I may not be able to induce some of our country-men to interest themselves more and more in the study of the *Bhagavadgītā* with a feeling of genuine earnestness and sincere devotion; for, I feel certain that such a study is well calculated to do them immense good by enabling them to understand the real meaning and value of life as well as the supreme purpose for which it has to be lived. I have been more than once asked on behalf of the *Śrī-Pārthasārathi-svāmi-sabhā* to 'deliver some

lectures'; and although I have been of opinion that the members of this *Sabhā* are engaged in the work of moral self-culture and social and religious improvement, still it has not been easy for me to fall in with the proposal. I have often enough delivered stray lectures; and somehow it has appeared to me invariably that the amount of labour and thought bestowed on such work is disproportionately too large for any really good results which flow from it. Therefore, when it was seriously proposed to me that I should hold classes and expound the *Bhagavadgītā* in them, it naturally occurred to me that an earnest endeavour to understand and appreciate the value of the wise guidance, which that uniquely great philosophical poem offers to man, would undoubtedly be of real use to all those who took part in the endeavour. However, let me particularly impress upon your minds at the very commencement that, in agreeing to conduct this work of class-exposition, I do not and cannot come before you in the capacity of an authoritative religious preceptor. I desire to think and to learn with you in our united study of the *Bhagavadgītā*; and it is well to remember from the beginning that all of us, who shall from time to time meet in these classes, have accordingly to come together in the spirit of humble learners, who are ever ready to be helpful to one another—helpful even to him who has under your direction taken up the duties of the teacher. I shall spare no effort to place before you, in as clear a language as I can command, what I have myself learnt, after some amount of study and thought, from the *Bhagavadgītā*. You know, quite as well as I do, that all the various schools of Vēdāntic Philosophy and Religion in India have accepted the *Bhagavadgītā* as a work of high scriptural authority. It has, therefore, been interpreted by these various schools, so as to be in harmony with the fundamental views and doctrines respectively held by them. Hence I beg of you to see no sign of vanity or self-sufficiency in my work, if, in endeavouring to expound the *Bhagavadgītā* to you, I do not strictly follow any one of these more or less sectarian interpretations of that work. While I have no doubt that it is impossible for any man to have a better guide in life than the *Bhagavadgītā*, I feel compelled to own that, unless one understands and appreciates it in the light of one's own reasoning and religious aspirations, one cannot derive much effective advantage even from such an unparalleled work on the philosophy of human conduct.

Without the aid of direct personal appreciation and immediate personal assimilation, even the grand teachings contained in it cannot truly become the foundation-principles of man's higher life and holy destiny. Let us now commence our work here with a *śānti* or prayer of peace, with which it has long been our tradition in this country to commence the study of the *Upanishads*. And in the situation in which you and I now find ourselves, the most appropriate prayer of peace is this which is contained in the *Taitirīyōpanishad*. Please let me repeat it and translate it.

हरिः ओम् । सह नाववतु । सह नौ भुनक्तु । सह
वीर्यं करवावहै । तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु । मा
विद्विषावहै । ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

"*Hariḥ Ōm*! May (He) protect us together! May (He) foster us together! Let us together strive heroically. Let that which we learn be full of power. And let us not hate each other. *Ōm*! Peace! Peace! Peace!"

The high rank and authoritativeness of the *Upanishads* have long been known among us to belong also to the *Bhagavadgītā*; and our initial utterance of this prayer of peace is thus in full accordance with our national tradition, even as it is with my desire to study, to think and to learn with you in performing this work of teaching the *Bhagavadgītā*, which your friendly partiality has assigned to me. Let us now begin at once to strive together heroically. The central story of the *Mahābhārata* relates, as most of us are aware, to the rivalry between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, as cousins, entitled to inherit the same common ancestral kingdom and all its associated privileges of sovereignty; and I take it to be needless to narrate to you how this rivalry came to have its culmination in that great war, at the commencement of which Śrī-Kṛishṇa is known to have taught the *Bhagavadgītā* to his relation and friend and disciple, Arjuna. The author of the *Mahābhārata* is the famous seer and sage, known as Kṛishṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa; and the language of the *Bhagavadgītā* is naturally intended to be understood as being his in all probability. This divine song of philosophic wisdom constitutes a part of the *Bhīshma-parvan* of the

Mahābhārata; and there it is given in the form in which Sañjaya is conceived to have narrated it for the information of Dhṛitarāshṭra. In the very first chapter of the *Bhīshma-parvan* it is mentioned that Vyāsa meets Dhṛitarāshṭra before the actual commencement of the war, and wishes to know if he is willing to have his blind eyes opened, so that he may be able to see with his own eyes the events of the coming war. Dhṛitarāshṭra declines to have his eyes so opened, as he feels that he cannot bear the sight of the slaughter of his own kindred. But he requests Vyāsa to arrange that those events are all fully and accurately reported to him from time to time. Accordingly, Vyāsa bestows the power of supra-normal vision on Sañjaya, and directs him to report all the details regarding the progress of the war to Dhṛitarāshṭra. In deputing Sañjaya for the performance of this work, Vyāsa commends him thus to the blind old king:—

एष ते सञ्जयो राजन् युद्धमेतद्वदिष्यति ।
प्रकाशं वाप्रकाशं वा दिवा वा यदि वा निशि ॥
मनसा चिन्तितमपि सर्वं वेत्स्यति सञ्जयः ।
नैनं शस्त्राणि छेत्स्यन्ति नैनं बाधिष्यते श्रमः ॥

"O king, this Sañjaya will tell you all about this war. Sañjaya shall know all things, whatever is open as well as whatever is secret, whatever takes place during the day as well as whatever takes place at night; he shall know even that which is only thought of in the mind. Weapons of war shall not wound him, and fatigue shall not trouble him."

It is therefore possible for some to say that Sañjaya, who was in this manner endowed with the power of supernatural vision, actually reproduced the dialogue between Śrī-Kṛishṇa and Arjuna, which Vyāsa incorporated later on into the *Mahābhārata*. The structure of the work in its general plan does not seem to be opposed to such a view. But this supposition is not free from certain serious difficulties and incongruities. It may still be said by uncritical students that the language of the *Gītā* is certainly that which was actually used by Śrī-Kṛishṇa and Arjuna in their

dialogue. But so far as our immediate purpose is concerned, it is enough for us to know that, to whomsoever we may attribute the language of the *Gītā*, the teachings therein contained are certainly conceived to be due to the divine wisdom and knowledge of truth possessed by Śrī-Kṛishṇa. The acceptance of Śrī-Kṛishṇa among us as a divine incarnation is, indeed, in a marked measure due to his having been the Great Teacher of the *Bhagavadgītā*. It is a lesson which is easily learnt from the history of man all over the world, that humanity holds in immortal reverence the memory of only those persons, who have, by the worthiness of their lives as well as by the wisdom of their thoughts and utterances, deserved such reverence. It is in the nature of things impossible for any unworthy and hence unlawful usurper to occupy in security for any length of time that consecrated throne of hearty worship and reverential homage, which is, to the glory of man, firmly established within his divinely illumined and aspiring heart.

One great peculiarity of the *Bhagavadgītā* may be mentione here as consisting in the high catholicity and broad toleration and comprehensiveness of the doctrines which are taught therein by Śrī-Kṛishṇa. The line of teaching adopted by Him is, in this respect, strikingly different from that which has been followed by almost all the other great religious teachers of mankind. You will see, as we proceed with our study of the *Bhagavadgītā*, that it fully establishes the title of its inspired author to the unique distinction of being the Greatest Harmonizer of human civilisation and its institutions, the aim of whose teachings has been to organise the various human communities in India in all their grades of development into one peaceful, well-ordered and progressive whole. He seems to have discerned valuable truth as well as worthy utility in all the conflicting views of life and religion that were current in His days in this country, and has expounded a theistic system of philosophy and ethics which is singularly striking in respect of its rare power of synthesis and unification. Other great religious teachers in India and in other parts of the world have also taught their own doctrines and dogmas regarding the great problems of life and death as well as regarding the problems of God and the universe; and naturally enough almost every one of them has endeavoured to maintain that

his own apprehension of the truth is more correct and more complete than that of any other religious teacher. The famous founders of what have been called personal religions have invariably so taught their wisdom to man as to cause their own inspiration and inner vision of things to become the exclusive basis of the various faiths and creeds built thereon by their loving followers in the wide field of human history. This kind of partiality to one's own conclusions and convictions is a psychological necessity in the nature of man; and all of you ought to be able to see at once that this natural tendency of the mind is in no way inconsistent with the thorough sincerity and glowing enthusiasm of any really great religious teacher to work out a suitable plan of life for the guidance of mankind. While there is thus nothing wrong or even strange in many of the great teachers of mankind upholding the particular plan of life and the particular system of thought, which each of them has severally propounded for the good of man both here and hereafter, it is indeed undeniably uncommon that Śrī-Kṛishṇa should have proved a notable exception to this general rule. Like other great teachers, He also has expounded what He Himself has considered to be the best plan of life and the truest system of religion and philosophy. But at the same time He has distinctly pointed out to us that all other plans of life and all other forms of religion and systems of thought are also good and worthy, so long as they, by their special adaptation to particular human conditions, are capable of strengthening the character of man and of enabling him gradually to rise to higher levels of perfection and self-realisation. Man always realises truth only in proportion to his own capacity to know it, and in accordance with his own more or less comprehensive vision of the reality which underlies all things; and it comes out in connection with all the institutions of civilisation that the very nature of the way in which truth and perfection are presented to man is as much determined from time to time by his own capacity to comprehend and assimilate them, as that capacity of his is, in its turn, determined by the picture of truth and perfection which is presented to him to behold and to admire. The line of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teaching in the *Bhagavadgītā* is thus, in spite of the strangeness of its wide and inclusive toleration, in full accord with the history of the development of human civilisation and the growth of man's power

of thought and moral capacity in all the varied aspects of his life at all times and in all places.

Looking upon the life of man here on earth as a kind of pilgrimage to perfection, one may easily understand how it is that absolute truth is both unattainable and unassimilable by man, till the holy goal of this illuminating and purifying pilgrimage is reached at last. A few inspired souls among us, when blessed with the rare gift of divine vision, may observe and know a milestone or two in advance along the road to this goal of human perfection; but even they cannot go alone in any unduly great haste to the goal, leaving the large body of the toiling pilgrims far behind; for, if they did so, they would lose their leadership, and, through that loss, miss the very purpose of their specially endowed earthly life. Therefore it appears to me that Śrī Kṛishṇa was perfectly right in declaring that all plans of life and all forms of religion and systems of thought are worthy of sympathetic recognition and appreciation at the hands of all really wise men, so long as there are to be found, at the various stages on this sacred road to perfection, bodies of pilgrims who are severally capable of healthily and cheerfully responding to the moral stimulation of one or other of those plans of life and forms of religion and systems of thought. Each of these has not only a more or less marked proportion of realised truth in it, but is also characterised by a certain amount of special fitness in relation to those who accept it and adopt it for their guidance in life. It is in this kind of reciprocal fitness that we have the true measure of the power for good, which by right belongs to our knowledge of the truth of things as well as of the proper aims of life. A plan of life, a form of religion, or a system of thought may in itself be very good, very true; nay, it may even be as perfect as possible under the circumstances. Nevertheless, if it be wanting in this kind of fitness in relation to those to whom it is offered for guidance, it would really be of no use to them. The value of religions and philosophies is thus dependent upon two factors—upon the proportion of realised truth and wisdom which is contained in them, and then upon their suitability to strengthen and improve anywhere in connection with any community or individual the happiness and purity of human life and the nobility of human aspirations. If you judge

in this manner, you may yourselves easily see how all those plans of life and forms of religion, that have been and may yet be with advantage adopted by any portion of mankind, have to be considered to be essentially good; inasmuch as every one of them has in association with it this special feature of fitness, this peculiar power to evoke response and urge on moral as well as spiritual progress among those who have to guide their lives in the light of its wisdom and practical discipline. In dealing, therefore, with the various philosophical and religious systems and institutions in the world, we have to look upon them not as being antagonistic to each other, but as being mutually helpful in evolving the good of man as a whole; here, if anywhere, we have to rise from the lower to the higher, and from the higher to the still higher, till at last we reach the highest good. So long as the component communities which make up mankind cannot all be in the same political or social or moral condition, so long also it is impossible for all of them to live on the same plane of religious and philosophical realisation. And when all these things are well borne in mind, we cannot fail to recognise the peculiar greatness of Śrī-Kṛishṇa as one of the most famous religious teachers known to the history of man. His greatness in the sphere of religion and philosophy is, as I said, unique, inasmuch as His work therein has been one of synthesis, harmonisation and unification, rather than of separation, self-assertion and antagonism. That Śrī-Kṛishṇa has adopted this method of composition and conciliation; that He has in His teachings endeavoured to put together and to co-ordinate the various kinds, classes and conditions of human life, so as to make it possible for the whole of mankind to become, in spite of its internal inequalities, organised into an amicable and interdependent family; that in matters of religion and philosophy He has affirmed the need and also the justice of the peculiarly Indian spirit of inclusive toleration, so as to enable men to realise that, in every form of worthy and widely accepted religion as well as the plan and discipline of life connected therewith, there is truth as well as use; that He has taught us—that all such plans of life and forms of religion and systems of thought, as have proved useful to man in his upward evolution, are also helpful and complementary to each other—and that, in judging their merit, our business is not so much to see, which of them is superior to which others and in what

respects, as to learn how each of them deserves to constitute a rung in the ladder by which man has to rise step by step from the human to the divine. All these things, as they are taught in the *Gītā*, will become plain to you as we proceed with our study of that illustrious and immortal song of divine wisdom.

Why Śrī-Kṛishṇa adopted this synthetical and conciliatory method in his religious and philosophical teaching, while almost every other great religious teacher is known to have adopted the very different method of supersession and self-assertion, is indeed well worthy of being taken into consideration. There is, of course, the popular way of answering this question, namely, that this synthetical and conciliatory method is the most appropriate method, and that Śrī-Kṛishṇa adopted it uniquely in relation to His teachings, because He was no less than a human incarnation of God Himself. I do not say that either of the points in this popular and orthodox way of answering the question is wrong or untenable. The *Gītā* itself will enable you to see on what strong foundation this orthodox conclusion of the faithful followers of Śrī-Kṛishṇa rests. However, even those, who are not willing to accept this orthodox view on trust, ought to be willing to judge fairly the greatness of the teachings for which He is held to be responsible; and then if they realise that that kind of religious and philosophic teaching, which creates harmony and advocates toleration and conciliation, is superior to the other kind of teaching which creates inharmony and provokes isolation and exclusive self-assertion, the greatness of Śrī-Kṛishṇa as a teacher of religion and of the philosophy of conduct will at once be seen by them to be fully capable of rational demonstration. But the rationalistic enquirer may still wish to know how this special greatness associated with the teachings of Śrī-Kṛishṇa is to be explained and accounted for. A question which he might well ask is—'Were there any contributory circumstances in the ancient history of India, which led to the manifestation of this kind of greatness in relation to the life of Śrī-Kṛishṇa as a religious teacher?' In answer to this question as to what influences might have moulded and given shape to the teachings of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, it may be well to point out that racial antagonism also was probably one among the causes of the great war of the *Mahābhārata*. If this war was

to any extent a struggle between two or more racially different communities and civilisations, Śrī-Kṛishṇa could not have failed to observe and to take note of the humanitarian and progressive forces that were in operation in those various contending communities and civilisations. Impressed in all probability in this manner by His varied racial and social environment, He propounded His religion of harmony and synthesis, and constructed for the good of mankind a plan of life, wherein, while the actual differences among men and among human communities in endowment and colour and creed are not wholly ignored, as they well cannot be, the way to attain that highest ethical and spiritual perfection which is possible for man is freely open to all, irrespective of all such differences. Universal harmony, cosmopolitan love, and tender concern for, and loving sympathy with, those weaknesses of man, which are due to unfinished growth and incomplete development, constitute the conspicuous moral feature of the grand religious synthesis taught by Śrī-Kṛishṇa. Can these noble and comprehensively humanitarian qualities of harmony and love and sympathetic toleration grow naturally in an atmosphere of social uniformity and racial isolation and exclusiveness? I leave you to answer the question for yourselves. Let us now turn our attention actually to the *Gītā*.

CHAPTER I.

धृतराष्ट्र उवाच—

धर्मक्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे समवेता युयुत्सवः ।
मामकाः पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत सञ्जय ॥ १ ॥

DHṚITARĀSHṬRA SAID—

1. The men of my party and the Pāṇḍavas, who, desirous of fighting in war (against one another), met together on the holy plain of Kurukshētra— what did they do, O Sañjaya?

In this *ślōka* Dhṛitarāshṭra asks Sañjaya, who had come to report to him the events relating to the retirement of Bhīshma from the battlefield, to describe to him from the very beginning the

details of what the Kauravas and their army as well as of what the Pāṇḍavas and their army did, when they came together to fight as enemies on the great battlefield of Kurukshētra. Please observe that this battlefield of Kurukshētra is spoken of here as a holy plain. Elsewhere in the *Mahābhārata* it is described as तपःक्षेत्र, that is, as a plain which is sacredly suited for the performance of religious austerities. To us now the whole of the extensive plain of Kurukshētra is undeniably holy and ever memorable, because it was on that plain that Śrī-Kṛishṇa taught the divine and immortal *Bhagavadgītā* to Arjuna. But even in those ancient days before the war of the *Mahābhārata*, the plain of Kurukshētra seems to have been considered holy. It is situated between the Jumna and the now dried up river Sarasvatī of ancient fame, and forms a portion of that part of Āryāvarta which has been called Brahmarshidēśa by Manu (II. 19 and 20.)—

कुरुक्षेत्रं च मत्स्याश्च पाञ्चालाः शूरसेनकाः ।
एषु ब्रह्मर्षिदेशो वै ब्रह्मावर्तादनन्तरः ॥
एतद्देशप्रसूतस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मनः ।
स्वं स्वं चरित्रं शिक्षेरन् पृथिव्यां सर्वमानवाः ॥

This quotation from Manu makes it plain that the Brahmins of Kurukshētra were in those ancient days considered to be such as were worthy to set the example of conduct for other men to follow in this world; and thus Kurukshētra deserved even then to be known as *dharmakshētra*, that is, as a holy plain whereon the Brahminical life of exemplary righteousness and piety was being lived. Moreover, Kurukshētra is referred to even in Vēdic literature as a holy plain on which the gods performed their sacrifices. And one may imagine another explanation as to why, in connection with this great war of the *Mahābhārata*, the plain on which its battles were fought, deserves to be called holy; it is this plain which, as it were, decided by the result of the battles fought thereon, on which of the two contending sides *dharma* or justice and righteousness rested, whether it was on the side of the Pāṇḍavas or on the side of the Kauravas. Indeed every battlefield, on which decisive battles have been fought in history in connection with really just and

righteous wars, deserves in this sense to be considered a holy plain. Anyhow, the very choice of this great and holy battle-field seems of itself to give to the war a special significance.

To the question of Dhṛitarāshṭra, asking for information regarding how the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas began the war, Sañjaya replies as follows :—

सञ्जय उवाच—

दृष्ट्वा तु पाण्डवानीकं व्यूढं दुर्योधनस्तदा ।
आचार्यमुपसङ्गम्य राजा वचनमब्रवीत् ॥ २ ॥

SAÑJAYA SAID—

2. Then the king Duryōdhana saw the army of the Pāṇḍavas drawn up in battle-array, and afterwards approached (his) preceptor (Drōṇa) and spoke (to him) words (to the following effect.)

There are two points in this *ślōka* which seem to deserve attention. The first of these is that Duryōdhana, the eldest son of Dhṛitarāshṭra, is here spoken of as *rājā* or king. Whatever may be the nature of the title he had for his kingship, there is no doubt that at the time of the occurrence of this war, as for some years before it, he was in actual possession of the rights and privileges of sovereignty; and it is this fact that largely accounts for Bhīshma, Drōṇa and others, who had recognised the justice of the cause of the Pāṇḍavas, having placed themselves in the service and at the disposal of Duryōdhana, so as to use all their heroism and power and skill in warfare in his favour and against the Pāṇḍavas. Why did these worthy and venerable men, who undoubtedly possessed much wisdom and sincerely loved justice, act in the strange manner in which they did, thereby making it appear that they, by their action, knowingly supported injustice as against justice? The explanation which they themselves offer in the *Mahābhārata* is that they had bound themselves to be servants of Duryōdhana in return for the pay which he bestowed on them. Though their explanation is put in this language, it means clearly enough that the discipline appertaining to any body of properly co-ordinated public servants

often demands rightly the subordination of the conviction of the individual servant to the policy and purpose of the sovereign whom he has undertaken to serve. Obedience or loyalty to constituted authority forms the main basis of order in the working of all human institutions; and in the struggle between the duty of obedience to constituted authority, on the one hand, and the dictates of personal conviction, on the other, human welfare is not always promoted by insisting that the former should necessarily give way before the latter. Indeed less danger is seen to result to the safety of society on the whole from undue obedience to authority, than from disobedience that may even be justifiable ethically. Do all the soldiers and their commanders, for instance, who fight on any side in a great war, feel fully convinced of the absolute justice of the policy of their Government in relation to that war? Can those among them, who are perhaps not so convinced, decline to fight in the war, even when they are called upon and bound in duty to do so? Can complete reliance on individual conviction keep an army together at all for any length of time in the conduct of any war anywhere? Obedience to the authority which maintains order, even though that authority rests on morally weak or imperfectly justifiable foundations, is under all ordinary circumstances a duty; and when one has taken service voluntarily under such authority, one's obligation to obey it ungrudgingly becomes doubly binding. So much indeed seems to be implied in the open recognition of the kingship of Duryōdhana by Bhīshma, Drōṇa and others in this connection. The next point is to ascertain if there was any special reason why Duryōdhana drew in particular the attention of Drōṇa to the arranged army of the Pāṇḍavas and made to him his first remarks about it. It may be because Drōṇa was his *guru* and had taught him the use of warlike weapons, and therefore deserved to be specially appealed to for help at such a critical juncture, that Duryōdhana appealed to him thus. But may it not also be that Duryōdhana probably wanted to rouse the old grudge of Drōṇa against the Pāñchālas, and thus make him fight on his side with intensified zeal and devotion? There does not seem to be anything strange or incompatible with truth in the supposition that Duryōdhana addressed Drōṇa now in this manner, chiefly because he was well aware of Drōṇa's feeling of sustained animosity against the Pāñchālas.

पश्यैतां पाण्डुपुत्राणामाचार्य महतीं चमूम् ।
व्यूढां द्रुपदपुत्रेण तव शिष्येण धीमता ॥ ३ ॥

3. O Master, look at this great army of the sons of Pāṇḍu, as arranged in battle-order by your clever disciple, the son of Drupada.

Dhrishṭadyumna is the person that is referred to in this *ślōka* as the clever disciple of Drōṇa and the son of Drupada. Being the brother of Draupadī, he was brother-in-law to the Pāṇḍavas. The reason why Duryōdhana drew the attention of Drōṇa to the fact, that the army of the Pāṇḍavas had been arranged by Dhrishṭadyumna, and that this Dhrishṭadyumna was his own disciple in learning the art of war and was possessed of marked intelligence seems to be clear enough, seeing that it is quite consistent with the idea that Duryōdhana wanted to rouse the old grudge of Drōṇa against Drupada and the Pāñchalās. The sly suggestion of ingratitude in the conduct of Dhrishṭadyumna in relation to Drōṇa is so cleverly made here as to be specially worthy of note. In this army of the Pāṇḍavas there were many heroes of importance, and it was quite natural on the part of Duryōdhana to point them out to Drōṇa one by one. So he says—

अत्र शूरा महेष्वासा भीमार्जुनसमा युधि ।
युयुधानो विराटश्च द्रुपदश्च महारथः ॥ ४ ॥
धृष्टकेतुश्चेकितानः काशिराजश्च वीर्यवान् ।
पुरुजित्कुन्तिभोजश्च शैब्यश्च नरपुङ्गवः ॥ ५ ॥
युधामन्युश्च विक्रान्त उत्तमौजाश्च वीर्यवान् ।
सौभद्रो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्व एव महारथाः ॥ ६ ॥

4. Herein there are several heroes with mighty bows, who are equal to Bhīma and Arjuna in battle; there are Yuyudhāna, Virāṭa and Drupada of the great chariot.

5. There are, moreover, Dhrishṭakētu Chēkitāna and the brave king of Kāśī; there are also Purujit, Kuntibhōja and Śaibya, who is great among men.

6. There are again Yudhāmanyu, possessed of prowess, and Uttamaujas, possessed of heroism, the son of Subhadrā as well as the sons of Draupadī. All these are indeed warriors of the great chariot.

These represented the various notable warriors on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. Yuyudhāna was otherwise known as Sātyaki. Virāṭa was the king of the Matsyas, and Dhrishṭakētu was the king of the Chēdis. The son of Subhadrā was the renowned Abhimanyu; and Prativindhya, Sūtasoma, Śrutakīrti, Śatānīka and Śrutasēna, each of whom is known to have been born to one among the five Pāṇḍava brothers in the order of their age, were the sons of Draupadī. All these and the other heroes mentioned in the above *ślōkas* are declared to have been *mahārathas* or warriors of the great chariot; and it is worth observing that Drupada also is specially characterised here as a great warrior. The expression *mahāratha* may mean a warrior who fights his battles from within a great chariot. In those days of the *Mahābhārata* war battles must have been fought in a manner which is very different from what happens to be the practice now. It appears that in those days every warrior of any note really went to the battle-field in a chariot and fought his enemies from within it; and it may be that the size and the splendour of the chariots were generally in accordance with the acknowledged valour and greatness of the heroes who used them. Technically a *mahāratha* is defined to be a warrior, who, riding in a great chariot in the battle-field, is capable of attacking successfully 10,000 foot-soldiers fighting with bows and arrows. A warrior who, being himself within a chariot, is capable of fighting effectively against another warrior, who also has the advantage of being within a chariot, goes by the name of a *samaratha*, while the warrior who is capable of fighting well against many *samarathas* is described as an *atiratha*.

After pointing out in this manner the chief warriors in the army of the Pāṇḍavas, Duryōdhana speaks about the warriors in his own army to Drōṇa thus:—

अस्माकं तु विशिष्टा ये तान्निबोध द्विजोत्तम ।
नायका मम सैन्यस्य संज्ञार्थं तान् ब्रवीमि ते ॥ ७ ॥

7. Those who are noted among us, the leaders of my army, do you know them, O excellent Brahmin. I mention them to you in order that you may well recognise them.

While the leading warriors on the side of the Pāṇḍavas were all pointed out to Drōṇa mainly with the object of enabling him to understand the strength of the enemy, Duryōdhana declared that his drawing the attention of Drōṇa to the leading warriors in the Kaurava army was due to his desire to enable Drōṇa to recognise them all well. Himself being a leader in the Kaurava army, Drōṇa must have known the leading warriors on his side; and that is why Duryōdhana says संज्ञार्थं तान् ब्रवीमि ते—I mention them to you in order that you may recognise them well and thus remember them as warriors who have thrown their lot with us and are on our side.

भवान् भीष्मश्च कर्णश्च कृपश्च समितिंजयः ।
अश्वत्थामा विकर्णश्च सौमदत्तिस्तथैव च ॥ ८ ॥

8. (They are) yourself, Bhīshma, Karṇa, Kṛipa—the victorious in battle, Aśvatthāman, Vikarṇa and also Saumadatti:

These warriors are perhaps mentioned here in a special order of precedence, which was, according to Duryōdhana, in keeping with their rank due to age and acknowledged heroism. Among the warriors mentioned here Vikarṇa was the third among the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra, and thus the second younger brother of Duryōdhana. Saumadatti was the son of Sōmadatta, the king of the Bāhīkas, who are known to have occupied then the outer part of what is now known as the Punjab. The others are of course well known, and I need not tell you who they are.

अन्ये च बहवः शूरा मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः ।
नानाशस्त्रप्रहरणाः सर्वे युद्धविशारदाः ॥ ९ ॥

9. And many other heroic warriors, who have set apart their lives for my sake and possess many instruments and weapons of war, all of them being well-skilled in fighting battles.

This *ślōka* is a continuation of the sentence begun in the previous one; and it is worthy of note that the expression मदर्थे त्यक्तजीविताः has been translated as 'those who have set apart their lives for my sake'. Since these warriors were all alive at the commencement of the war, it means that they had not yet parted with, but only had set apart their lives, which they were ready to risk and to give up at once for the sake of Duryōdhana.

Even though these skilled and heroic warriors, with various kinds of weapons to use, were Duryōdhana's friends, and had elected to fight on his side and, if necessary, lose their lives in the war, still his anxiety at this crisis was not unnaturally very great; and accordingly he said—

अपर्याप्तं तदस्माकं बलं भीष्माभिरक्षितम् ।
पर्याप्तन्त्विदमेतेषां बलं भीमाभिरक्षितम् ॥ १० ॥

10. Still, our army looked after by Bhīshma is not quite adequate; but this army of theirs, which is looked after by Bhīma, is adequate.

There is difference of opinion among commentators and translators as to what the words पर्याप्तम् and अपर्याप्तम् mean in this *ślōka*. Some hold that अपर्याप्तम् means 'unlimited' in strength, and पर्याप्तम् means 'limited' in strength If these words are interpreted thus, it would appear that Duryōdhana was then speaking to Drōṇa with a feeling of self-confidence due to his being certain of attaining success in the war. The next two *ślōkas* do not appear to be in keeping with the prevalence of such a feeling in the mind of Duryōdhana; on the other hand they indicate that his mind was really agitated with great anxiety. It appears to me that what he wanted to say and did say was, that his own army, led and looked after by Bhīshma, was not quite strong enough to come off with victory in the impending struggle against his enemies.

This sense of the insufficiency of his army to fight successfully against his enemies is really what is implied in the expression *aparyāptam.* The armies that were drawn in battle-array on the great plain of Kurukshētra just before the commencement of the war were altogether, it is said, eighteen *akshauhiṇīs* in strength, of which eleven were on the side of the Kauravas and only seven on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. It may therefore seem to some that the statement which declares the numerically stronger army to be inadequate, at the same time that it mentions the numerically weaker army to be adequate, requires both explanation and justification. That the adequacy of an army for any particular purpose does not wholly depend upon its numerical strength is a widely known fact of history and of observation. Other things being equal, the numerically stronger army must necessarily be more powerful and prove more effective. However, Duryōdhana seems to have thought that in his case the other things were not equal. It is moreover natural on his part to feel very anxious to secure victory for his side in the coming war. This very anxiety may have made him think that the enemies were more powerful than they really could be. Duryōdhana spoke from the standpoint of a man, who was seriously interested in the issue of the war; and there can indeed be nothing strange or inexplicable, even if he purposely exaggerated the strength of the enemy with the object of rousing the enthusiasm and intensifying the heroism of Drōṇa and all the other great warriors, who had enlisted themselves on his side. There is also another point to be attended to in the *ślōka*, inasmuch as Duryōdhana is therein declared to have said that his army, under the guidance and guardianship of Bhīshma, was inadequate for the purposes of the war. To students of the *Mahābhārata*, it is a well known fact that, if Duryōdhana had the whole matter at his own disposal, he would have made Karṇa the first generalissimo of the Kaurava army in preference to Bhīshma, who had openly given out that, in the contention between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, justice was really on the side of the Pāṇḍavas. Thus Duryōdhana must have been of opinion that Bhīshma was partial to the Pāṇḍavas; and he might have also thought that old Bhīshma was not after all so great a warrior as Karṇa. It seems to be reasonable enough under these circumstances for Duryōdhana to have declared that

his army was, in spite of its superiority in numerical strength, not quite adequate for the purposes of the war on hand. This view is further strengthened by the statement of Duryōdhana, that the numerically weaker army of the Pāṇḍavas was quite adequate, seeing that Bhīma was in command over it. In addition to the enthusiasm of Bhīma on the side of the Pāṇḍavas being certainly greater than that of Bhīshma on the side of the Kauravas, it is worthy of remark that, in the whole of the story of the *Mahābhārata* almost up to the hour of this great war, there had been incessant rivalry between Bhīma and Duryōdhana, and that, in all the previous contests between them, Bhīma had uniformly come off victorious. Thus there were good reasons of one kind or another which made Duryōdhana feel uneasy at heart in regard to the adequacy of his own army to enable him to win the glories of victory in the great war that was soon to be fought. That is why I consider that *aparyāpta* means 'inadequate' and *paryāpta* means 'adequate.'

With the anxiety thus shown to be natural, and with the object of stimulating the heroism of Drōṇa and the other leading warriors of his own army, Duryōdhana went on to say—

अयनेषु च सर्वेषु यथाभागमवस्थिताः ।
भीष्ममेवाभिरक्षन्तु भवन्तस्सर्वे एव हि ॥ ११ ॥

11. Do you, even all of you, staying in your respective places along all the lines, offer your support unfailingly unto Bhīshma.

It seems to have been a kind of rule in ancient days that the leading warriors from the commander-in-chief downwards should all be actually engaged in the work of fighting in the field; and in this arrangement the very safety of the person of the commander-in-chief had a high value in settling the issue of battles. Danger to him often meant panic in the army which was commanded by him, and panic led to defeat and discomfiture. How, even in the comparatively recent history of India, the unseating of the leader of an army from his high place in the 'howdah' on the back of an elephant has been enough to make that army give way in the struggle, must be well-known to most of you. Apart from this, it is

necessary that, whoever he happens to be the commander of an army must be implicitly obeyed by all those who are under him as subordinate leaders; otherwise no army can be effective. Thus this appeal of Duryōdhana to the warriors on his own side may be interpreted to mean further that they were all called upon to place themselves fully at the disposal of Bhīshma, and to so conduct themselves as to be always ready to make his leadership and prowess as effective as possible. Here let us stop for to-day.

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Obviously with the object of fortifying the heart of Duryōdhana, who was, as we saw in our last class, getting disheartened, and also with the object of lessening, as far as possible, his fear and anxiety in regard to the result of the war, Bhīshma immediately made a display of his heroism and valorous spirit of loyalty to duty thus :—

तस्य संजनयन् हर्षं कुरुवृद्धः पितामहः ।
सिंहनादं विनद्योच्चैः शङ्खं दध्मौ प्रतापवान् ॥ १२ ॥

12. (Then) the heroic grandsire, the aged Kuru, mightily roared out the lion's roar and blew his conch-shell so as (thereby) to produce cheerfulness in him.

The roaring out of the *siṁhanāda*, or the lion's roar, and the blowing of the conch-shell obviously served as signs of challenge; and by the readiness as well as the heartiness of the challenge so thrown out, Bhīshma not only gave Duryōdhana to understand that there was no need for him to be anxious, but also assured him that he was willing to do his duty and fight on his behalf whole-heartedly and to the best of his ability. This manner of displaying the spirit of chivalrous challenge seems to have been widely prevalent among Indian warriors in ancient days; and hence the whole army commanded by Bhīshma at once took the hint, and so acted in its turn as to accentuate the meaning and force of the challenge.

Accordingly—

ततः शङ्खाश्च भेर्यश्च पणवानकगोमुखाः ।
सहसैवाभ्यहन्यन्त स शब्दस्तुमुलोऽभवत् ॥ १३ ॥

13. Then all at once the conch-shells, the kettle-drums, the cymbals, the drums, and the horns were (all) sounded; and the sound so produced became a tumultuous uproar.

Thus in addition to the various conch-shells owned and sounded by the various heroes and warriors, the musical band attached to the army must also have contributed to this great uproar and din of challenge. After such a display of the spirit of dauntless enthusiasm on the part of the Kaurava army—a spirit distinctly indicative of their full willingness and thorough readiness to fight out the battles of the war—the army on the opposite side responded in a similar manner to this spirited invitation to commence the fighting. This terrific uproar of challenge, produced by the army of the Kauravas, was thus met by an equally terrific uproar of chivalrous response, produced by the warrior-chiefs and men belonging to the army of the Pāṇḍavas.

And this roar of response was produced in the following manner:—

ततः श्वेतैर्हयैर्युक्ते महति स्यन्दने स्थितौ ।
माधवः पाण्डवश्चैव दिव्यौ शङ्खौ प्रदध्मतुः ॥ १४ ॥
पाञ्चजन्यं हृषीकेशो देवदत्तं धनञ्जयः ।
पौण्ड्रं दध्मौ महाशङ्खं भीमकर्मा वृकोदरः ॥ १५ ॥
अनन्तविजयं राजा कुन्तीपुत्रो युधिष्ठिरः ।
नकुलस्सहदेवश्च सुघोषमणिपुष्पकौ ॥ १६ ॥

14. Then standing in their great chariot, to which white horses were yoked, (both) Kṛishṇa and Arjuna blew their conch-shells.

15. Kṛishṇa blew his 'Pāñchajanya', Arjuna blew his 'Dēvadatta', and Bhīma of terrible deeds blew his great conch-shell 'Pauṇḍra'.

16. Yudhishṭhira, the king and son of Kuntī, blew his 'Ananta-vijaya'; Nakula and Sahadēva (respectively) blew the 'Sughōsha' and the 'Maṇipushpaka'.

काश्यश्च परमेष्वासः शिखण्डी च महारथः ।
धृष्टद्युम्नो विराटश्च सात्यकिश्चापराजितः ॥ १७ ॥
द्रुपदो द्रौपदेयाश्च सर्वशः पृथिवीपते ।
सौभद्रश्च महाबाहुः शङ्खान्दध्मुः पृथक्पृथक् ॥ १८ ॥
स घोषो धार्तराष्ट्राणां हृदयानि व्यदारयत् ।
नभश्च पृथिवीं चैव तुमुलो व्यनुनादयन् ॥ १९ ॥

17. And the king of Kāśī—the wielder of the mighty bow, and Śikhaṇḍin—the warrior of the great chariot, Dhṛishṭadyumna, Virāṭa, and Sātyaki—the ever unvanquished;

18. Drupada and the sons of Draupadī, and the mighty armed son of Subhadrā—all these on all sides, O king, blew severally their respective conch-shells.

19. That tumultuous uproar made the earth and also the sky resound, and rent asunder the hearts of the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra.

This terrific sound, which was thus produced in response to the challenge of the Kaurava army, was by its heartiness and powerfulness clearly indicative of the determination of all the soldiers in the army of the Pāṇḍavas to fight to the bitter end; and it is natural enough that such sound, so produced and so understood, made the hearts of the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra quake in fear.

Before actually beginning the battle, Arjuna very naturally wanted to have a full view of the situation of the armies, and accordingly addressed Śrī-Kṛishṇa thus:—

अथ व्यवस्थितान् दृष्ट्वा धार्तराष्ट्रान् कपिध्वजः ।
प्रवृत्ते शस्त्रसंपाते धनुरुद्यम्य पाण्डवः ॥ २० ॥
हृषीकेशं तदा वाक्यमिदमाह महीपते ।

अर्जुन उवाच—

सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत ॥ २१ ॥
यावदेतान्निरीक्षेऽहं योद्धुकामानवस्थितान् ।
कैर्मया सह योद्धव्यमस्मिन् रणसमुद्यमे ॥ २२ ॥
योत्स्यमानानवेक्षेऽहं य एतेऽत्र समागताः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रस्य दुर्बुद्धेर्युद्धे प्रियचिकीर्षवः ॥ २३ ॥

20. Then Arjuna, the Pāṇḍava of the monkey-flag, saw the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra in their condition of arranged readiness; and as the attack with the weapons of war was (about) to commence, he took up his bow.

21. And spoke the following (words) to Kṛishṇa, O king.

ARJUNA SAID:—

Draw up my car, O Kṛishṇa, between the two armies;

22. So that I may, in the meanwhile, see well these men, who are ready and anxious to fight, and (may know) who they are with whom I have to fight in this great work of war:

23. Those who have come together here with the object of fighting and are desirous of doing good in battle to the evil-minded son of Dhṛitarāshṭra—them I wish to see well.

Śrī-Kṛishṇa at once recognised that this desire to know who they were, against whom he had to fight, was quite natural on the part of Arjuna. It was partly due to curiosity, and must have been also prompted partly by the wish to estimate the value of the heroism that was enlisted on the side of Duryōdhana. And the request of Arjuna was complied with accordingly.

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्तो हृषीकेशो गुडाकेशेन भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये स्थापयित्वा रथोत्तमम् ॥ २४ ॥
भीष्मद्रोणप्रमुखतः सर्वेषां च महीक्षिताम् ।
उवाच पार्थ पश्यैतान् समवेतान् कुरूनिति ॥ २५ ॥
तत्रापश्यत् स्थितान् पार्थः पितॄनथ पितामहान् ।
आचार्यान् मातुलान् भ्रातॄन् पुत्रान्पौत्रान्सखींस्तथा ॥ २६ ॥
श्वशुरान् सुहृदश्चैव सेनयोरुभयोरपि ।
तान् समीक्ष्य स कौन्तेयः सर्वान् बन्धूनवस्थितान् ॥ २७ ॥
कृपया परयाविष्टो विषीदन्निदमब्रवीत् ।

SAÑJAYA SAID:—

24. Having been thus spoken to by Arjuna, Kṛishṇa stopped, O descendant of Bharata, that most excellent chariot between the two armies,

25. In front of Bhīshma, Drōṇa, and all the kings (there assembled); and said—'O Arjuna, see these assembled Kurus'.

26. Then Arjuna saw there, arranged in position in both the armies, fathers and grandsires, teachers and maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and similarly friends,

27. Fathers-in-law, and also cordial companions. On seeing thus all his kinsmen so readily arranged for battle,

28. Arjuna was overpowered by a strong feeling of mercy and spoke in grief as follows:—

This feeling of mercy, which is said to have overpowered Arjuna thus, deserves to be somewhat closely examined here at

the commencement of our study of the *Bhagavadgītā*. I have heard it said that the *Bhagavadgītā* does not deserve to be taken as an authoritative and scriptural guide in respect of man's moral conduct, in as much as the very first thing that it teaches is that war is good and that the slaughter of men in battles is right; while it is everywhere else clearly recognised to be the function of religion and morality to enforce the lessons of mercy and charity and love in respect of all human relations. It will become plain, as we proceed, that the *Bhagavadgītā* itself enforces these lessons with great emphasis and decisiveness. But the lessons of mercy and charity and love cannot radically contradict the obligatoriness of the duty of war, whenever war does really become a duty. Moreover the *kripā* or mercy which actuated Arjuna in this situation was not, as we may easily see, free from the taint of selfishness. Mercy and charity and love, even when selfishly exercised, do good; even then they are certainly twice-blessed, blessing him that gives and him that takes. But it has to be distinctly borne in mind that this kind of mercy or charity or love, which has a selfish motive behind its manifestation, is decidedly low in its character; for, owing to its association with selfishness, it is apt to lead us often along wrong paths, so as to prevent us from making, at the call of duty, the larger and the more completely unselfish sacrifice. It may thus become hard for us to exhibit in our lives that nobler kind of genuinely disinterested mercy and love and charity which is enjoined by all true religions, and which alone is capable of bestowing on the soul of man the salvation of everlasting freedom and blissfulness. To love one's own wife and children and kindred is in every way worthy and honourable; and the man who shows himself to be incapable of even this amount of love does not deserve to be a man at all. He is worse than many beasts. But the worthiness as well as the value of one's love of kindred disappears, as soon as one's attachment to wife and children and other relations hinders the further expansion of the heart and checks the larger growth of sympathy and unselfish love. Without this larger love and wider charity none is fit to live the life of a really great man. The mercifulness of Arjuna in relation to his kindred is, in this situation, in conflict with the proper performance of his duties as a soldier—as a great *Kshattriya* hero and

warrior. It is for this reason that Śrī-Kṛishṇa looks upon it as a weakness. No worthy soldier ought to turn away from a war in which truth, justice and the progress of humanity are at stake; and that love of kindred or mercifulness to friends and relatives, which induces a soldier to slip away from the holy battlefields of such a war, does not at all deserve to be commended as a true and valuable virtue. Wars are even now the final arbiters of justice. That there is a power, higher than human wisdom and human heroism, which determines the results of wars and the consequent character of the march of human civilisation, is an idea which is constantly borne in upon the mind of all thoughtful and philosophic students of history. Divine Providence seems to have been seated on the edge of the killing sword in all the great battles known to human history; indeed the fighting human armies have been only instruments in the hands of God. This, of course, does not affect the justice of the contention that one of the chief aims of civilisation ought to be to work for the cessation of all wars. Human civilisation cannot be conceived to have become anything like perfect, unless the very possibility of wars is altogether removed from it. But till that perfected condition of civilisation is reached, wars are both necessary and unavoidable: for wars alone now constitute the best available means by which wars have to be ended. Let us think of the condition of civilisation at the time when Śrī-Kṛishṇa taught the *Bhagavadgītā* to Arjuna, and let us also think of the condition of civilisation now; and then let us say honestly whether the call to battle, which Arjuna then had as a warrior, was or was not on behalf of justice and goodness. It is one thing to be able to conceive that happy millennium of human perfection, wherein there will be no need for wars at all; and it is quite another thing to conduct ourselves now and here as though that millennium had already arrived. The inevitableness of war imposes on man the duty of war; and whenever war does become a duty, there is to the soldier no moral escape from having to fight it out. Therefore it is nothing other than weakness and vacillation for a warrior to allow himself to be deterred from doing his duty in war, even if he does so under the influence of genuine love and sincere sympathy for his own friends and relations. Please judge in this light whether Arjuna's mercy was really misplaced or not.

There is indeed no doubt that the feeling of mercy, with which Arjuna became overpowered just before the commencement of the war, was considered by Śrī-Krishṇa to be misplaced and unworthy. That such a feeling of mercy is really misplaced, can be established by examining in a spirit of fairness the question of the place of war in the evolution of human civilisation. War ought to be avoided, whenever it can be avoided; but when it cannot be avoided, he that has to fight out its battles ought to be, under no circumstance, allowed to decline to do his duty. How this conception of duty in relation to war is worked out and applied later on to duty in general, we shall see as we proceed. Meanwhile let us go on and note the way in which, overpowered by misplaced mercy, Arjuna became unfit, for the moment, to do the great work before him, as it is pointed out in the following *ślōkas* :—

अर्जुन उवाच—

दृष्ट्वेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम् ॥ २८ ॥
सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति ।
वेपथुश्च शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च जायते ॥ २९ ॥
गाण्डीवं स्रंसते हस्तात् त्वक् चैव परिदह्यते ।
न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः ॥ ३० ॥
निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।
न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥ ३१ ॥
न काङ्क्षे विजयं कृष्ण न च राज्यं सुखानि च ।
किं नो राज्येन गोविन्द किं भोगैर्जीवितेन वा ॥ ३२ ॥
येषामर्थे काङ्क्षितं नो राज्यं भोगाः सुखानि च ।
त इमेऽवस्थिता युद्धे प्राणांस्त्यक्त्वा धनानि च ॥ ३३ ॥

ARJUNA SAID:—

28. Seeing these men, O Krishṇa, who are my kindred and have come here with the desire to fight in the war;

29. My very limbs faint away in weakness, my mouth becomes dry; my body trembles and the hairs stand on end;

30. My bow, 'Gāṇḍīva', slips down from the hand, and my very skin is burning; I am unable to stay as I am, and my mind seems to wander.

31. I see also inauspicious omens, O Kṛishṇa, and do not see any good in killing my own kindred in battle.

32. O Kṛishṇa, I do not desire to win victory; nor (do I wish) to have the kingdom, nor pleasures. What is the good to us now, O Kṛishṇa, of a kingdom and of enjoyments and even of our own lives?

33. Those very men, for whose sake we desire to have the kingdom and (all) enjoyments and pleasures, have come here to fight, having set aside their lives as well as their wealth.

Here it seems to be necessary to make a few remarks to bring out clearly the meaning of what Arjuna says. He evidently means to say that even those, who selfishly seek pleasures and seek wealth, cannot enjoy in a wholly selfish way all that they seek and win. The organization of society everywhere is so based on man's common human nature that it is not possible for any of us anywhere to enjoy either pleasures or wealth in an absolutely self-centered manner. No man is in a position to live absolutely selfishly and altogether for himself, so as to be totally unrelated to the persons as well as the social and other institutions around him. I am here reminded of a remark of Matthew Arnold's, in which he says that the man who does not marry is undoubtedly free from certain troubles, but that he is at the same time incapable of experiencing many of the true pleasures of life. That remark should tell us how our capacity to live well and to enjoy our lives is largely dependent upon the strength and the intimacy of our relation to the society wherein we live. Unless we vitally connect ourselves with the people around us, so that they become thereby

the sharers of our joys and of our sorrows, our power to enjoy life and all its worthy opportunities happens to be really next to nothing. So, man can never be altogether selfish in his aims; it is impossible for his life to be wholly confined within himself. Even a highly selfish man, with his love of kingdom or of wealth or of enjoyments, cannot find any satisfaction in life without the company and the sympathy of others; for it is in sharing our advantages with others that the essence of most enjoyments in life is to be found. That being so, and it being a common tendency of human nature to let our kindred and friends become the sharers of our advantages, of our joys and of our pleasures, we may easily understand why Arjuna maintans that victory and wealth, obtained through the destruction of friends and relatives, are not at all worth having.

आचार्याः पितरः पुत्रास्तथैव च पितामहाः ।
मातुलाः श्वशुराः पौत्राः स्यालास्सम्बन्धिनस्तथा ॥ ३४ ॥
एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किन्नु महीकृते ॥ ३५ ॥

34. (There are here our) revered teachers, fathers, sons, and similarly grandsires, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, and brothers-in-law, and persons who are related to us (in other ways).

35. I do not like to kill these, although I am attacked by them, O Kṛishṇa—(not) even for the sake of the sovereignty over all the three worlds. Will I (do so) for the sake of this earthly world?

The idea of the three worlds goes back to the old Vēdic period of Hindu thought, the three worlds being those with which we are all familiar in the religious formula *Ōm Bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ*. They are the earth, the heaven, and the intermediate world of *antariksha*. And these three worlds are conceived to make up the whole universe, so that *trailōkyarājya* implies the title to exercise kingly sway over the whole universe.

निहत्य धार्तराष्ट्रान्नः का प्रीतिः स्याज्जनार्दन ।
पापमेवाश्रयेदस्मान् हत्वैतानाततायिनः ॥ ३६ ॥

36. By killing these sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra, what pleasure will there arise unto us, O Kṛishṇa? Surely sin will cling to us, if we kill (even) these murderous opponents.

The word translated as murderous opponents is *ātatāyinaḥ*; the term *ātatāyin* is generally explained to mean a man who is engaged in making a murderous attack. It is, however, used also to signify incendiaries who set fire to buildings, persons who kill others by means of poison, men who wantonly attack others with offensive weapons so as to cause their death, and men who rob others of their wealth, or of their lands, or of their wives. All these six different kinds of criminals are often denoted by this word. Those of you that know the story of the *Mahābhārata* are surely in a position to make out that Arjuna is perfectly justified in speaking of the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra as *ātatāyins*; for these are shown in the *Mahābhārata* to have been guilty of all the six different kinds of crime referred to now. Therefore there can be no surprise in Arjuna having spoken of them thus. But what, perhaps, is more surprising, than his characterisation of the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra as *ātatāyins*, is his remark that sin would cling to him if he should kill them. The erroneous character of this opinion of Arjuna has to be clearly understood before we proceed any further. Here one is reminded of the controversy regarding what is known as the doctrine of the non-resistance of evil, that is, the doctrine which inculcates the idea of overcoming evil not by resisting it but by yielding unto it. That, in this manner, some bad men have been converted into adopting the life of love and righteousness, is to be found in the history of all great religions; and the truth of such conversions may often be proved by means of evidence that is fully trustworthy. Here is a story given by the late Svāmi Vivēkānanda in relation to a *sannyāsin* who was in the habit of practising *yōga* in Northern India; and in it we have a case of conversion through non-resistance. This *sannyāsin* was in the habit of going into the trance of *samādhi*, sometimes for days and sometimes even for weeks together. When he awoke from the trance he would come up to a place, where, inside a garden, there was a small room, in which he kept the images of the God he worshipped, and

also the utensils needed for the conduct of that worship. It seems that those vessels and other utensils were made of silver and had been presented to him. A robber in the neighbourhood somehow came to know of this; and he had learnt also that the *sannyāsin* was in the habit of getting into the trance of *samādhi* in a subterranean cave close by, so that, at the time when he was in the trance, his room would be freely at the disposal of any thief. One day when the *sannyāsin* was in *samādhi* in the cave, this robber entered the room, took up all the silver articles therein, with the exception of one or two which he perhaps did not see, and was coolly trying to walk away with the booty. Just at that time, it so happened that the *sannyāsin* came up from his cave; and on seeing him, the thief took to his heels. The *sannyāsin* went into the room and saw what had occurred. He immediately took hold of the remaining articles, which the thief had not carried away, and began to run after him. The thief saw the pursuing *sannyāsin* and ran for life, and the *sannyāsin*, being well practised in *yōga*, which gives one the power of controlling one's breath, could run much longer and more swiftly than the thief. Soon enough, therefore, the *sannyāsin* overtook the thief. Then, instead of scolding the thief and trying to hand him over to the police for punishment, the *sannyāsin* said—"My dear man, I have not come to do you harm. I know that, had it not been for your poverty, you certainly would not have taken away these vessels and the other articles. You have not, however, taken away all the things that may prove of use to you. Here are some more; take them also. They too will be of some good to you in your great want." I cannot describe how the thief must have felt on hearing the *sannyāsin* speak to him thus. From that moment, however, he is said to have become converted; and there-after all through his life he never robbed, and was a good man and a devoted disciple of that same *sannyāsin*. Such conversions do not appear to be strange at all, but are really, on the other hand, more possible than many of us imagine.

But this fact of the possibility of such conversions ought not to blind us to the other fact also, namely, that such conversions are indeed very rare. We can all easily imagine thieves who, under such circumstances, would have thought that the *sannyāsin* was a fool,

and would have readily accepted the offer of the other silver articles also, and then gone away gaily to rob again elsewhere. Hence this doctrine of non-resistance is, in so far as the existing conditions of life in the world are concerned, only capable of a partial application. Whether any society, as at present constituted and belonging to any part of the earth, can get on without restraining criminals and without punishing crimes, is a question which is really worthy of serious consideration. Judging from the highest *sāttvika* standpoint, that is, from the standpoint of the highest love and mercy and resignation, the doctrine of non-resistance appears to be ethically perfect and absolutely good. Even if we, in accordance with this doctrine, hold that punishment is in itself an evil, whether we can afford to give up punishment altogether, and make sure at the same time that man's moral progress is thereby rendered easier, is what I am indeed very doubtful about. The Hindu religion is well aware of this doctrine of non-resistance as giving expression to the highest *sāttvika* ideal of conduct; but it does not in consequence ignore altogether the value of punishment. According to Manu, kings alone have ultimately vested in them the power of punishment, which he calls *daṇḍa*. This *daṇḍa* is declared by him to have been created of old by God for securing the welfare of mankind. The value of punishment as a means to secure the welfare of mankind is thus openly recognised by him. The place of punishment in human civilisation is indeed much like the place of war therein. Just as all wars have to aim at the final cessation of war, so all punishments have to be so inflicted as to make the need for punishment disappear altogether from human society and civilisation. There is no doubt that the Indian ideal of the life of *nivṛitti* is based on renunciation and non-resistance; and it is an ideal which is beautifully well suited to develop the morality of the isolated individual. However, even in the case of the individual, unless he has the power of self-assertion, he cannot lay claim to the merit of self-surrender. It is impossible to get over the great difference between the non-resistance of the strong man, who is quite capable of retaliating, and the non-resistance of the weak man, who cannot retaliate at all. Even the unwordly *sāttvika* must therefore have the capacity and strength to punish the wickedness which may be made to work against him; only he should not use that capacity and that strength

for that purpose. There is indeed much moral virtue in this kind of non-resistance, in so far as the individual who practises it is concerned. But as a social ideal, this doctrine of the non-resistance of evil inevitably breaks down, for the reason that no society is either wholly or even largely made up of such *sāttvika* individuals as have the fitness and the natural inclination to live this life of ready renunciation and ungrudging self-surrender.

If all the men and women in a society, or at least a great majority of them, are found to be actuated by what is known as the *sāttvika* temperament of calm serenity and unselfish unworldliness, then this doctrine of non-resistance will form the best ethical ideal for such a society to follow; and it will therein prove very efficacious in converting the few that may still be morally too weak to adopt the noble life of non-resistance. But I really do not know if we can at all discover any society anywhere, that may safely do away with the God-given power of punishing evil for the correction of evil. So, then, punishment, at its worst, is a necessary evil; and it is certain to continue to be necessary in man's common life of *pravṛitti*, that is, in his life of labour and attachment, till a plane of higher moral perfection is reached by him, when he might practically come to know that it is no longer desirable to adopt punishment as a means for sustaining the progress of social or individual morality. Arjuna has not obviously realised all this yet. He is simply captivated by the abstract innocence of the life of selfless and unworldly resignation. He thinks more of the harm and the pain associated with punishment, than of the good which comes out of it. Punishment appears to him very much like a bitter pill, the bitterness whereof is realised, but not the healing power. Certainly his judgment on punishment is not impartial. They say that punishment is of value to man and to society in more than one way. It, first of all, prevents others from doing the wrong deed for which any man is punished in their presence or to their knowledge. It also has, they say, the power of reforming the wrong-doing individual who is punished. Certain punishments, however, do not seem to possess this power of reforming the wrong-doer. It is maintained that in inflicting the punishment of death, for instance, there is no scope for the reformation of the criminal. According to Hindu

philosophy even such punishment may well reform those who are made to receive it. It may be that this punishment of death will make it possible for the man, who has duly received it, to come to be born, in the next re-incarnation, into a better life and a better environment, and to inherit a stronger moral capacity than he would have done if he had not been so punished. The Hindu doctrine of re-incarnation gives indeed a new meaning to all punishments. To say, that the life of the soul on earth is confined only to one birth and to one death, is to say really what is more unproved, than to say that it is not so confined to only one birth and only one death. If we believe in the reality and in the immortality of the soul; if we believe further that its salvation becomes possible only by means of the slow and gradual perfection of its embodied life here upon the earth; if we realise that that perfection cannot at once be reached even by the best of men; and if we learn the value and meaning of heredity as a moral factor in the life of men and of human communities, and endeavour to account for and understand the origin of genius and other similar phenomena; it surely becomes impossible for us then not to hold that this doctrine need not be untrue in itself. But there is even stronger evidence in favour of this doctrine of re-incarnation—and that is the evidence of those men who have successfully performed the great psychological experiment of *yōga*. When a person, succeeding in the practice of *yōga*, gets into what is known as the state of *samādhi*, he must have so far and so well concentrated his mind upon itself, as to make it become altogether oblivious of the external world. They say that, in that condition of extreme mental concentration, it is possible so to rouse and awaken the memory, as to bring within its field of conscious recognition even such of the soul's experiences as appertain to some of its previous conditions of re-incarnation.

In this statement I see nothing which is in itself impossible or absurd. Modern psychology is already beginning to recognise the import and the power of what it speaks of as the sub-conscious states of the human mind. Every experience of ours, whether we attend to it closely or not, leaves behind it a certain impression upon the mind, which in Sanskrit goes by the name of *saṁskāra*. That such impressions are often dormant, and that, under favourable

circumstances, arising sometimes normally and sometimes abnormally, these dormant impressions of man's previous experience come up to the level of his wakeful consciousness—these are all ideas which are fairly widely accepted by modern psychologists. If we grant the existence of such sub-conscious states of the mind, then it is hard to see why it should be impossible for the *yōgin*, with his mind so concentrated upon itself, to awaken into conscious life the sub-conscious impressions left upon his mind by the events relating to his previous conditions of re-incarnation. Mental concentration is known to be generally helpful in waking up the dormant memory. It is also known that certain diseases, such as hysteria, exercise a peculiarly strange influence in rousing the memory, so that forgotten impressions of even unsuspected experiences are vividly brought within the range of the conscious working of the mind. There are indeed many more impressions of past experiences left on our mind than we are aware of; and that we do not ordinarily remember an experience is therefore no proof of its non-occurrence in relation to us. After all the *yōgin* alone can verify the *yōgin's* experiences; others can only indirectly argue as to their possibility and reasonableness. When the sub-conscious impressions left on the mind are, under favourable circumstances, realised as conscious experiences of the past, we say that they are remembered; but the nature of memory itself still remains unexplained. When memory is so possible to the human mind, and possible also in respect of such impressions of which the individual is unconscious in his normal and natural condition, then why there cannot be the possibility of such memory in relation to our previous states of re-incarnation, it is really very hard to understand. To my mind it appears that, if sub-conscious impressions on the memory can, under favourable circumstances, be generally realised as conscious experiences of the past, the mental impressions left by previous states of re-incarnation may also be similarly remembered, provided we have the favourable opportunity that is needed for it. This favourable opportunity is, it is said by Indian *yōgins*, produced by the practice of that intense mental concentration whereby one gets into the state of *samādhi*. Strengthened will-power and sustained concentration of attention can surely recall even the faint and faded memories of the past. What the *yōgins* say about remembering past re-incarnations, we ought not,

therefore, to discard at once as either improbable or absurd ; for, if you examine the theory and practice of *yoga*, as expounded in Sanskrit works, it is distinctly seen to be a series of psychological experiments specially designed to prove the reality and the ever enduring eternity of the soul.

Whether the mind or the soul or whatever we call that principle of consciousness, which makes us all conscious beings, whether it is anything other than the fleeting perceptions of the senses ; whether, underlying these fleeting perceptions of the senses, there is a basic reality in the form of a unifying will and intelligence—that is the question which our ancient sages endeavoured to solve by means of this process of direct psychological experimentation. It is stated in the *Kaṭhōpanishad* that the Creator created the senses and then turned their activities outwards, but that a brave man turned those activities inwards and thus saw his own internal self. This attempt to direct the externally active senses, so as to make them internally active, is called *yōga* ; and those who are students of Patañjali's *Yōgasutras* will be able to see how all its psychological experiments are directed towards such self-realisation. If the value of these psychological experiments is to be fairly judged, and if anything like a final opinion in favour of or against its declared results has to be pronounced, those alone can do it well and with authority who are themselves experts in the practice of *yōga*. From this I do not mean that we should entirely abstain from exercising our own judgment in the matter. I do not say that, because one is not an expert in a certain field of special knowledge, one ought to believe everything which is by any one else declared to have been obtained out of that field as a result of direct experimentation, even when such result seems to be radically absurd and insupportable. What I say is that, if you yourself are not an expert and cannot by yourself arrive at the declared results of a process of scientific experimentation, you are bound to judge the whole question from the probabilities connected with it, and from the rationality that is discoverable in its explanation. Accordingly, we cannot say that the *yōgin's* experiences are of no psychological value, and that his keener and more comprehensive memory has no relation to truth. It is good for us here and now to understand and bear in mind that the soul of all beings may go

through more than one embodied life on earth. Thus the punishment, which is inflicted on an individual for the wrong that he does, even though it then deprives him of his life, may well be productive of good to him in relation to the future embodiments of his soul. So, the idea, that punishment is divine in origin and is capable of producing much moral good to man is one, in favour of which there is indeed a great deal to be said.

When I say this, I do not want that you should carry with you the impression that I do not think well, or that Hindu philosophy and the Hindu scriptures do not think well, of that peaceful and blissfully innocent condition of man's social life on earth in the coming millennium, wherein there will be no crime and no need for punishment at all. Punishment, as I said already, has always to be so utilised as to take away from human communities the need for punishment altogether. That millennium, wherein there is no need for the infliction of any kind of punishment on anybody, is indeed worthy of the highest admiration, and has to be aimed at by all those who have to any extent in their hands the great privilege of working out the progress of man's humanity. In this matter of punishment, as in every thing else, it is a serious mistake to suppose that the millennium is actually with us, when it has not yet arrived at all. To maintain, therefore, that this doctrine of non-resistance is ideally the best, is perfectly justifiable; but to act in accordance with that doctrine of non-resistance, in the present imperfect condition in which we find human communities, is not certainly either true kindness or farseeing wisdom. Not having realised the meaning and value of the justly inflicted punishment, Arjuna said that sin would take hold of him if he should kill even those who were admittedly death-worthy sinners. Moreover, it is not the action itself that determines the creation or the non-creation of sin. For instance the king punishes a murderer by having him hanged. The murderer has taken away the life of a man; and the king also, in punishing the murderer with death, takes away the life of a man. What, then, is the moral difference between the king and the murderer? In that lies the solution of the question, whether, by punishing sinners, Arjuna himself would become sinful. Where the killing is due to self-seeking motives on the part of the killer,

it is wrong and is sure to give rise to sin. But where the infliction of death is not due to self-seeking motives, but is due to the doing of duty, with the conviction that, by so punishing him who is guilty of serious wrong-doing, the good of society and the improvement of morality are both certain to be accomplished—there surely no sin can arise out of the act of killing. That the motive mainly determines the sinfulness or otherwise of actions was not obviously well understood by Arjuna. We ought not to judge all actions in themselves and by means of their immediate consequences so much, as by means of the motives behind them and the distant consequences which they are calculated to produce. We must look more into the future than into the present in judging of the effects of the justly inflicted punishment. Arjuna, nevertheless, says again in a shortsighted manner—

तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तुं धार्तराष्ट्रान् सबान्धवान् ।
स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥ ३७ ॥

37. Therefore it is not proper for us to kill the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra along with their kindred. How, after killing our own people, may we become happy, O Kṛishṇa?

I should not kill these men, says Arjuna, for two reasons. Firstly if I kill them, what we Pāṇḍavas win by killing, them we cannot enjoy without them; and secondly, if I kill them to punish them for the wrongs done to us by them, sin will cling to me and make me unhappy. If I wish to enjoy the good results of the victory that I may win in this war, or if I wish to be free from the sin of killing our own kindred, it becomes incumbent upon me not to kill them at all. Such is obviously the feeling in the mind of Arjuna. You may, however, easily see that the mistake which Arjuna commits here is that he looks upon his own happiness and that of his brothers and other near relations as the object, which is to be accomplished by the successful execution of the great war, with all the fierce fighting and destruction that are inevitably involved in it. The chief glory of war is assuredly in the encouragement it gives to selflessness; even wars of personal ambition are known to have been hallowed quite abundantly by the unselfish sacrifice of life made therein at the call

of duty and under the impulse of loyalty. Think, then, how holy may be a really just war fought on behalf of righteousness.

यद्यप्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥ ३८ ॥
कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यद्भिर्जनार्दन ॥ ३९ ॥

38. Even if these sons of Dhritarāshtra, with their minds overpowered by covetousness, do not see the harm arising from the destruction of the family, and do not see also the sin that there is in the practice of treachery as against friends:

39. How is it, O Krishna, that we, who see so well the harm arising from the destruction of the family, are not to know how to turn away from this sin?

Arjuna now begins to give a third reason as to why he and his brothers should not take part in the war that was then so imminent. Before taking this reason of his into consideration, let us observe how expression is given here to the idea that the responsibility of an individual to conduct himself aright in life is proportionate to his knowledge of what is right and what is wrong. If an ignorant man, through his ignorance, sometimes does what is wrong, we generally feel and say that his conduct is more or less excusable. But if a man, who is not ignorant, but knows well what is right and what is wrong, does nevertheless what is wrong, in his case there is certainly no excuse whatever for the wrong-doing. Arjuna wants to impress on the mind of Śrī-Krishna that he is wiser than his opposing cousins, in that he wishes to turn away from fighting against them as a soldier and a warrior. But conduct which is based on wrong or insufficient knowledge is often quite as culpable as conduct which is wantonly mischievous. Therefore, we have all to make sure of the truthfulness, accuracy and adequacy of our knowledge, before we claim the honoured responsibility which arises from the possession of knowledge. Arjuna's knowledge of what is and what is not right for him to do in his present situation is far from satisfactory; and yet he relies on that knowledge, and in the light thereof mentions thus

what he considers to be the harm arising from *kulakshaya* or the destruction of family-life:—

कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥ ४० ॥

40. In case the family is ruined, the everlasting family-virtues are (all) destroyed; and when virtue is (so) destroyed, unrighteousness of course overcomes the whole family.

Any harm, which is done to the family as a social institution is naturally apt to injure all those virtues, which the family has to nourish and to safeguard. Nobody can deny that much of man's advance in morality and in civilisation is due to, and is even now dependent upon, the institution of the family. Therefore whatever leads to the destruction of the love and the sense of obligation, which our corporate family-life naturally instils into us, is very rightly considered to be morally unwholesome. Let me here explain the word *dharma* translated by me as virtue. In Sanskrit literature *dharma* is defined to be that which is done under the prompting of scriptural commandments, or that through which both prosperity here and salvation hereafter are to be obtained. And now, if we are asked to say what that thing is by means of which we may obtain prosperity here and salvation hereafter, or what it is which we do in obedience to scriptural commandments, it is hard to answer the question in the English language by means of any single word other than 'virtue'. *Dharma* means, among other things, religion and morality, righteousness and duty; and most of you will at once see that the ideas expressed by these English words are so closely related to one another that what is expressed by any one of them cannot be fully separated from what is expressed by any other, although each of them, when examined in itself, conveys a more or less definite meaning. All of them may indeed be brought within the significance of the comprehensive term 'virtue'. Accordingly I have translated *kula-dharma* as family-virtue; and this is said here to be everlasting. In other words, the virtues of family-life are conceived to have been in existence ever since human society began to assume an organised familiar form; and it is held that they have to flourish and to

keep growing so long as humanity is destined to live and to prosper. The development of the social and moral progress of mankind was not possible in the past without the aid of this *kula-dharma*; and it will not be possible in the future also without such aid. When unrighteousness becomes overpoweringly preponderant in family-life, then the resulting danger to society and civilization is obviously very serious.

अधर्माभिभवात् कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसङ्करः ॥ ४१ ॥

41. Family-women become highly polluted in consequence of (their) being overpowered by unrighteousness, O Krishṇa; and when the women are polluted, there will arise (the evil of) *varṇasaṅkara*, O Krishṇa.

Varṇa-saṅkara literally means the mixing up of colours; and here it clearly signifies the mixing up of racial colours through unwholesome intercrossing between persons of different race-colour and different capacity for culture and civilization. In a general way this word signifies a socially, morally, and religiously unregulated state of the relation between the sexes. In connection with such a mixture of *varṇas*, Śrī-Krishṇa himself speaks later on with positive disapprobation. And what this mixture means, what its evils are, and why it has to be avoided by all progressive human communities, are questions which we may take into consideration on the next occasion.

iii

Last time we stopped at the third objection raised by Arjuna to fight in the great war of the *Mahābhārata*. The first of the three objections to which I drew your attention is that he was unwilling to kill his kindred, since whatever he might achieve, as the result of his fighting in the war, nothing of that would he be in a position to enjoy, owing to the destruction of his own friends and relations inevitably involved in the war. The second objection raised by him is that, by killing his enemies in battle—the enemies who had wronged him and his brothers so much—he would himself become

sinful. The third objection is not, however, personal, like these two; it relates mainly to the general welfare of society and its advancement. Arjuna pointed out that, by fighting in this great war and killing the enemies and their followers, there would assuredly arise *kulakshaya* or the destruction of the family-life. This destruction of the family-life would lead to the destruction of the ever-enduring *kuladharmas*, thus causing the ruin of all those virtues which the regulated family-life promotes. The ruin of the family and the resulting destruction of the lastingly beneficial virtues of family-life would give rise to *varṇasaṅkara*, that is, to what is commonly spoken of as the confusion of castes. What is meant by this term *varṇasaṅkara*, it is desirable for us to know fully and clearly before we proceed any further. *Varṇa*, which primarily means colour, also denotes caste. *Varṇasaṅkara*, which really means the mixing up of colours, also signifies 'confusion of castes'. What, then, is the relation between colour and caste?

Caste in India has had both a racial and a social origin. In the early days when the Āryas came to this historic land from somewhere in the north, they were obviously a powerful people fighting against those who were already in possession of the country, so as to subdue them and oust them from their possessions. When these Āryas settled down by force in the country thus, it was natural for them to have stood aloof socially from the neighbouring non-Āryan communities. As soon as the Āryas themselves became pre-eminent in position in their new home later on, they had to give up entirely their original nomadic habits, and lead a settled life with a regulated social polity of their own. When they organised such a social polity, it very naturally happened here as elsewhere that the Āryas themselves, as a body, became divided into two great strata, namely, an aristocratic stratum above and a plebian stratum below. This upper aristocratic stratum itself again became split into two new layers in India, the priests as the upholders of religion and the warriors as the upholders of the state representing the two newly created subdivisions. That the priest belonged usually in most ancient social organisations to the aristocratic stratum is borne out by the ancient history of Rome as well as of Greece. Only in Greece and in Rome, the priest—though he belonged to the aristocracy—did not rise in

power and in importance over the sovereign and the soldier. In India, however, the ancient Āryan priests gradually grew into a separate class, dividing themselves from the *Kshattriyas* and making it evident that these, as warriors and rulers, held their power and their authority in subordination to the power and the authority of religion. Indian politics is, in its earliest conditions, seen to be distinctly theocratic. In fact in many parts of the world the art of government has really had a theocratic origin. This theocratic subordination of the political power of sovereigns and soldiers to the religious power of the priests made it possible for the Āryan priests in India to become organised in time into a superior caste. Thus there arose among the Āryas themselves a division of the people into three different classes, namely, the aristocratic priest or the *Brāhmaṇa*, the aristocratic warrior or the *Kshattriya*, and the common free man or the *Vaiśya*. This kind of division of the people appears to have taken place in a more or less similar manner in almost every section of the great Indo-European family of mankind.

In addition to this, in the early days of civilisation all the conquering tribes and communities of people are also known to have held slaves. These slaves sometimes belonged to the race of their masters, at other times they were of a different race. When the slaves were of the same race and colour, it was easy for them to become amalgamated later on with their masters; but in the case of the slaves, who were of a different colour, such an amalgamation could not take place. So there arose first the three different classes of the Āryas in the newly organised social polity of ancient India and then there came the non-Āryan communities, against whom the Āryas in those early days had struggled and fought, and who had become later on reconciled to the Āryas so as to live in amicable relation with them. Obviously some of these associated communities became constituted into the fourth class. In the absorption of the non-Āryan communities into the Āryan social polity, they do not seem to have been always assigned to the fourth class; it is ascertainable that some of them occasionally found their way into the higher classes as well. That is how the system of four castes probably arose in this country. Soon enough in the history of the development of this composite social system, the idea of high and low as

depending merely upon class-status had to give way. Nevertheless, it seems to be clear that race-status and class-status are both pre-eminently responsible for the original organisation of caste in India. Here it is perhaps worthy of note that even in communities, where there was no possibility of any admixture of highly differing races and where there was only the possibility of the admixture of different classes of the same race and colour, strict regulations prohibiting intermarriages between the members of those different classes are known to have been in existence. In the history of Rome, for instance, such intermarriages were prohibited by law. In the same manner, in India also marriages between classes and races had to be regulated by law, so as thereby to make the progressive advancement of the common and connected life of the slowly organised composite community certain as well as secure. If we understand that, in these regulations relating to marriage, as they are found in our earlier *smṛitis*, special care has been taken to preserve whatever capacity for self-culture and self-discipline the Indian classes and races had already acquired, then we cannot say that those regulations have merely served the unwholesome purpose of checking the fuller growth of popular freedom and civilisation among us.

As a matter of fact, it has been pointed out by more than one student of history that, in so far as it can be made out from the survey of history and civilization in general, human progress seems to have been evolved invariably, not so much by the aggressive efforts of the people who were weak and down-trodden, as by the insight and readiness of those, who, being stronger and higher, worked willingly and out of love for the elevation of those that were submerged below. The benignant force which has propelled man's early progress in history and civilization has invariably had its origin in narrow aristrocratic circles. When, however, culture and capacity become in course of time fairly general among a people, then the ordinary members of the privileged aristocracy may, out of an undue regard for its exclusively enjoyed privileges, obstruct sometimes the further elevation and advancement of the common people. In such situations even this obstruction helps popular progress, by stiffening the backbone of the common people as history amply demonstrates. Culture, character, courage, and the heroism

of self-sacrifice are like carefully cultivated garden-products in the extensive field of human civilization. They have grown within fenced areas under special care and watchful tending. That such fenced areas, fitted to yield these garden-products of civilization, have now become wider than ever before, is no reason why we should consider them to be like the fruit of the wild plants rankly growing on the uncultivated land. If this is at all well grasped and understood, it becomes easy to see how the qualifications of the aristocratic *elite* of an old society to serve well their fellow-men happen to be certainly stronger and more numerous than the qualifications possessed by the common plebian section of that society to work to elevate its own level of thought and life. Modern conditions do not of course enable us to realise fully the truth of this remark; and we have, therefore, to transfer ourselves in our imagination to those far away conditions of society which existed in early days in the history of civilization. In this manner we may see that it is chiefly the cultured and highly-placed members of society with special privileges and responsibilities that were truly able, in the ancient history of most human communities, to win slowly for their people all that accumulated inheritance of good, by means of which it became possible later on to uplift the whole community gradually to higher and higher levels of discipline and thought and civilization.

Now let us look at the true position of the two sections of the aristocracy in ancient India, and look also at the nature of the functions which were assigned to them. The Brahminical caste was held responsible for the maintenance of learning and religion and morality, and for the teaching of whatever was valuable in those days as an element of culture or discipline to all the three originally Āryan castes. The Kshattriya was responsible for the maintenance of peace and order in society, and for the achievement of all such progress as depended upon military valour and upon the due and effective exercise of political authority. It is clear that the work for which the priestly caste was made responsible and also the work for which the warrior caste was made responsible were both intended to serve the common good of the community as a whole. We have further to note that there were restrictions placed upon the life of

both these castes with the object of preventing them from utilising their power and position for class-advantage or self-aggrandisement. The Brahmin was religiously enjoined to be always contented and to lead the life of poverty and purity in preference to the life of plenty and free enjoyment. The Kshattriya had to discard ease and pleasure and to be ever generous, so that all his wealth and power and achievements of heroism might go to serve the good of the community of which he had become guardian by birthright. Here was a responsibility which certainly was not calculated to make either the Brahmins or the Kshattriyas work for self-aggrandisement. There is no doubt that many among both of these castes did violate the obligations of this wisely planned rule of life. But the original organization was well aimed and well adapted then to serve the common good of the people as a whole. It is in fact this composite nature of the stratified early social life that made the unrestrained admixture of blood between the various castes unwholesome and undesirable, and led to the laying down of restrictions on intermarriages in the interest of the good of the community in general. Whether it is right or wrong to impose such restrictions is a point, about which modern investigations, bearing on the power of heredity in determining the character of individuals, leave no doubt. These investigations establish the potency of heredity in determining even the many minor details in the character of individuals. It has been ascertained that both saintliness and criminality run in the blood, which people inherit from their parents. If that be so, surely we ought to take particular care to see that there is no such intermixture of blood in composite communities as is not on the whole conducive to the growth of purity, strength and goodness in popular character. Otherwise, the already harvested fruit of moral self-discipline will be slowly but surely made to decay, and there will be no compensating advantage of any kind in lieu of this loss of the not easily attained purity and strength and goodness. If such truly is the value of heredity in determining the character of individuals, and if we further know that the practical preservation of this helpful power of heredity consists very much more in taking care that the women of a society are not easily polluted, than in looking after the personal discipline of the men thereof, then we at once see what an important influence woman exercises in preserving and

passing on that endowment of purity, strength and goodness, which any society may have acquired in the course of its growth in power, in enlightenment and in civilization.

The influence of the mother in the making of the children and their future life does not lie solely in the power which she wields at home and exercises more or less wisely on them; nor does it mainly depend on the kind of ideals and aspirations which she implants early in their young minds. It depends very much more on that other power which she has of giving to the very temperament of her children the peculiar impress of her own moral potentialities. The more fully we understand the potency of heredity in determining character, the more certainly we have to appreciate the value of the mother's impress on the whole nature of the child. Its physical constitution is granted to be largely, if not entirely, dependent upon that of the mother; and this determination of the entire constitution of the child by the mother is rightly held to be the basis of all mental and moral progress in society. That the physical constitution of a man is to a very large extent responsible also for his mental and moral make-up, is a lesson in teaching which the *Bhagavadgītā* is quite emphatic. It makes a distinction between the soul and the material body in which it resides, and declares that the manifestation of the activities of the body are not determined as much by the soul as they are by the qualities of the *prakṛiti*, that is, of the material of which the embodiment of the soul is composed. This is a distinction which we have to take into account in understanding why it is that a particular man is of a particular character, why it is that here we have a saint and there we find a sinner. Anatomically and chemically there may be no obvious or fundamental difference between the body of the saint and the body of the sinner. The soul of the saint and the soul of the sinner are, moreover, taught to be essentially alike. And still we see that the sinner sins while the saint does not. What is it then that really causes the difference between these two types of men? This difference is conceived to be due to a difference in the subtle quality of the *prakṛiti* or matter, of which the two bodies are composed. In the case of the body of the saint the *sattva-guṇa* of that matter predominates, while in the case of the body of the sinner it is the

tamō-guṇa thereof that preponderates. In the case of men, who are neither sinners wholly nor altogether faultless saints, it is the *rajō-guṇa* of the *prakṛiti* which is conceived to be predominant. If, in this manner, we understand that, between the impressed physical constitution of an individual and the nature of his life, there is a close relationship, then the mere physiological culture of man acquires an ethical value and becomes highly interesting as a problem closely related to the growth of morality and civilization. They speak of the breeding of cattle, of horses, of dogs, and of other animals: and those who endeavour to improve the breed of these animals are aware of certain rules which they have to observe in the matter of pairing them. If those rules are not strictly observed, the breed gradually deteriorates in vigour and in quality. In the case of man the operation of physiology cannot be different, in so far at least as his animal body and its native powers are concerned. Thus the old regulations relating to marriage seem to have distinctly aimed at the common good, since in them care was evidently taken to see that the accumulated wealth of character in the community did not deteriorate through random marriages, but was on the other hand helped on to grow and to increase.

Whether the free admixture of blood between individuals, belonging to different communities and living at different levels of civilization with different ideals and aims and aspirations, is productive of any good in the cause of general human progress, has been only recently discussed by Dr. Bryce in his recent Romanes Lecture; and the conclusion to which he has come cannot but be interesting to us. He is of opinion that such admixture in the long run tends to diminish the wealth of character and the potency for civilization which human communities possess. Although the weaker community may gain a little in quality and in vigour by its admixture with a comparatively stronger one, the stronger community loses a great deal more by its correlated admixture with the weaker one. The loss of the stronger community being more on the whole than the gain of the weaker community, such admixture is clearly not desirable in the interest of the progress of humanity as a whole. Instead of allowing such a free intermixture, it would therefore be better for mankind to achieve progress in a

manner, in which each of the communities which so differ from one another in point of capacity for culture and civilization, is kept aloof for marriage purposes, at the same time that it is given free scope to develope its own power and fitness to grow in worthiness and to prosper. The enduring worth of every community has always to be altogether self-evolved. External help by means of education, example, and preaching may be given with advantage to any community; but that help directly tells very little even upon the easily changeable mind, and leaves the blood with its hidden potentialities almost untouched. Herbert Spencer is also known to have been of opinion that even such communities as, in spite of their racial differences, occupy similar levels of culture and civilization, will suffer loss of power through unregulated intercrossing, owing to its tendency to disturb the stability of what may be called the physiological equilibrium of all their inherited racial endowments. This wholesome fear of the degradation of the power of a race through too free intercrossing is distinctly seen to be operating strongly among mankind even today in all parts of the world.

Indeed this dread of unsuitable racial intermixture has become almost instinctive in man; and it is through it that he has been able, not only to maintain as far as possible the purity of his blood, but also to go on advancing more and more in power and in civilization. If to-day, in the world as it now is, any universally prevailing authority promulgated a law doing away with all social and racial barriers in the matter of marriage, and declared that the men of races and communities at any level of civilization and moral culture were perfectly at liberty to marry the women of all races and communities at any other level of civilization and moral culture, and that unequally mixed and inter-racial unions alone were good and legitimate, then, in the course of a few generations, what would indeed be the condition of human civilization? A little contemplation, with the help of all the available evidence bearing upon a question of this kind, will enable us to see at once that the result will be degradation, and that man will then be seen to be more rapidly moving down into primitive savagery than ever he moved up to win the moral worthiness of a truly humanising civilization. It is thus that we have to understand the dread of *varṇa-saṅkara*, which

is so prominently noticeable in all our ancient law-books. The purely racial conception of caste is, no doubt, considerably modified by the teaching given in the *Bhagavadgītā*. But the original idea underlying caste was surely the race-idea. To induce the various contiguous and co-existing races of man-kind in the country to live happily with each other, to enable every one of them to evolve its own power and achieve its own progress by means of well-ordered intrinsic efforts, and to make all those races and communities as largely helpful to each other from outside as possible—such seems to have been the policy of social adjustment and regulation adopted so early in ancient India. Even without the internal social intermixture of marriage, it is certainy possible for human communities to be helpful to each other in various ways. It cannot be rightly denied that the Āryan and the non-Āryan communities in India have been on the whole helpful to each other in the long course of the history of India, in spite of there having been no very free intermixture between them through lawful marriage. The dread of *varṇa-saṅkara* has in fact a great deal to be said in its favour; indeed it seems to have been largely responsible for the rapid development as well as the steady maintenance of Hindu civilization.

सङ्करो नरकायैव कुलघ्नानां कुलस्य च ।
पतन्ति पितरो ह्येषां लुप्तपिण्डोदकक्रियाः ॥ ४२ ॥

42. The confusion of castes surely leads into hell the family (so ruined) as well as those who destroy the family. Indeed the departed fathers of these will fall, being deprived of the (religious) offering of food and water.

This *ślōka* enables us to see that Arjuna is pressing his moral difficulty on the attention of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, not from the stand-point of the *Vēdānta*, but from the standpoint of the *Smṛitis*. The commandments of religious law govern the morality of men through the fear of the punishment, which, it is held, their violation will bring down upon the wrong-doer. The dread of the angry God, who punishes, and the worship of the manes of the departed ancestors have both a prominent place in the legal [or *smārta* aspect of the

religion of the Hindus; and there are also other religions which possess these elements in their general make-up in a more or less marked degree. How, on specified occasions, the Hindus offer even now oblations of food and water to the manes of departed ancestors, cannot but be well known to all of you. How, again, the birth of a son is highly valued by Hindus, for the special reason that he will offer the requisite oblations to the spirit of the father after his death, is also surely within your knowledge. The confusion of castes and the consequent destruction of family-life and family-virtues must lead, as it is rightly believed here, to the cessation of ancestor-worship and necessarily also of the associated offering of these oblations of food and water to the manes of departed ancestors. It is no wonder that a result of this kind is considered to be highly harmful. Nowhere have society and civilization passed with easy steps from promiscuity to partiarchy,—at any rate not certainly in India: and is it any wonder that the family as a patriarchal institution is held in high honour?

दोषैरेतैः कुलघ्नानां वर्णसङ्करकारकैः ।
उत्साद्यन्ते जातिधर्माः कुलधर्माश्च शाश्वताः ॥ ४६ ॥
उत्सन्नकुलधर्माणां मनुष्याणां जनार्दन ।
नरके नियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥ ४४ ॥

43. By means of these faults of the family-destroyers, which give rise to the confusion of castes, the (regulated) duties relating to castes are destroyed, as also are the everlasting virtues of family-life.

44. We have heard it said, O Kṛishṇa, that those men, in whose case the virtues of family-life have been destroyed, have to live for ever in hell.

Among the teachings which Śrī-Kṛishṇa has given in the *Gītā*, there is one which points out to us that man has no greater enemy or no greater friend than himself. The plan of urging people to move on in the right path by holding out before them the terrors of hell is, in the history of religion, comparatively earlier than the

plan of insisting upon man's unselfishly doing his duties and thus delivering himself from his own weaknesses. The real struggle in the religious life of people is not so much against the possibility of their getting into an external hell as against the possibility of their making themselves into a hell. The *Upanishads* tell us that it is not the fear of hell that can keep us well in the right path and lead us unfailingly to the true goal of life; on the other hand, it is the self-discipline, which leads to unselfishness and implants in us the power and the desire to work out our true salvation, that helps us to go on to the attainment of the highest good of a really perfected life. This idea of religious and moral self-culture is a comparatively later one in the history of all religions. Fear of punishment precedes as well as helps the growth of the power of self-control; and when, to this fear based on religion, the love of family-pride and grateful devotion to the memory of departed ancestors are added, then the impulse in favour of regulated virtue and ordered morality becomes decidedly so strengthened as to make social life noticeably pure and praiseworthy.

Now Arjuna summarises his views and says—

अहो बत महत्पापं कर्तुं व्यवसिता वयम् ।
यद्राज्यसुखलोभेन हन्तुं स्वजनमुद्यताः ॥ ४५ ॥
यदि मामप्रतीकारमशस्त्रं शस्त्रपाणयः ।
धार्तराष्ट्रा रणे हन्युस्तन्मे क्षेमतरं भवेत् ॥ ४६ ॥

45. Alas! alas! we have begun to commit a great sin, since, out of the covetous desire to enjoy the kingdom and (its) pleasures, we have undertaken to kill our own kindred.

46. If the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra would, with weapons in their hands, kill me, who am not wielding (any) weapons and am not inclined to retaliate, that would be unto me productive of much greater happiness.

सञ्जय उवाच —

एवमुक्त्वार्जुनस्सङ्ख्ये रथोपस्थ उपाविशत् ।
विसृज्य सशरं चापं शोकसंविग्नमानसः ॥ ४७ ॥

SAÑJAYA SAID:—

47. So saying, Arjuna, whose mind was distracted through sorrow, threw aside his bow along with the arrows, and sat down within the chariot.

So ends the first chapter, which is called *Arjuna-vishāda-yōga*, with this sadly desparate determination of Arjuna not to fight in the war which was then at once to be begun. The very name given to the chapter shows that in it the chief thing to be noted is the great grief by which Arjuna happened to be over-taken in the battle-field just before the actual beginning of the war. Now, before we commence the study of the second chapter, let me draw your attention to a point which naturally comes out from the concluding part of the first chapter. That point is whether, as some ignorant critics contend, Hinduism enjoins inactivity upon man and desires him to give up all his duties and responsibilities in society and fly away from the stern battle-fields of life. We may see that, when Arjuna was thus overcome by the feeling of misplaced mercy in relation to his enemies, and declined to fight against them like a true hero and warrior, Śrī Kṛishṇa did not say to Arjuna that he was acting rightly; but on the other hand He earnestly endeavoured to impress upon the mind of Arjuna that he was in duty bound to fight. Indeed Śrī-Kṛishṇa ultimately succeeded in convincing the unwilling warrior that, through unselfish fighting alone, he could do his duty in life and thereby accomplish much good unto himself and unto the community of which he was a noteworthy and responsible member.

Then how is it, that this idea, that the religion of the Hindus teaches asceticism, renunciation and passivity, has gained any currency at all? In the religious scriptures of the Hindus two different paths of life are taught. One of these paths goes by the name of the *pravṛitti-mārga*, and the other by the name of the *nivṛitti-mārga*.

The first is the path of the active life of aggressive achievement, while the second is the path of renunciation and retirement. As a matter of fact, in the early days of the organisation of what is known as the *varṇāśrama-dharma* in this country, every man was expected to follow at different times both these paths of life. At one particular stage of his life he was called upon to follow the *pravṛitti-mārga,* and at another particular stage to follow the *nivṛitti-mārga.* As a *brahmachārin* or Vēdic student, and also as a *gṛihastha* or householder, he was expected to follow the *pravṛitti-mārga* of action and of social obligations, as taught in the religious law-books known as *smṛitis.* After having lived the life of the student and the householder, and discharged well the onerous responsibilities and obligations attaching to those two conditions of life, and after having enjoyed all that is good and worthy in life and having at the same time understood the snares and pitfalls of life as well as its numerous great privileges, the ancient Hindu was called upon to retire from the world of action and achievement and to adopt the *nivṛitti-mārga* or the path of renunciation. Hence in the later stages of his life he had to renounce its privileges and responsibilities and retire into the forest so as to spend the rest of his life there in contemplation and complete peace, thinking of the great problems of life and of the universe with the help of the experience that he had already gained as *brahmachārin* and as *gṛihastha.* Such was the order of life planned of old in Hindu society; and out of it came naturally into existence a collection of very valuable religious literature which laid greater stress upon retirement and renunciation than upon the hard-fought achievements of the life of action and endeavour. The life of aggressive achievements came to be considered as inferior mainly on account of its snares and pitfalls; and the achievements themselves could not, in the life of retirement, appear to be of any real value in enabling one to obtain the coveted salvation of the soul. The life of attachment is easier for man than the life of renunciation and non-attachment; and this comparative ease of the former kind of life has naturally raised the value of the latter kind. Thus perhaps arose the popular temperament inclined to pay more respect and attention to retirement and renunciation than to achievement and action. Almost every one of the important *Upanishads* has some amount of thought directed to

the teaching that renunciation and selflessness are better than achievement and attachment.

These two paths appear to be mutually contradictory, when they are imperfectly understood. Śrī-Kṛishṇa obviously taught the *Gītā* to Arjuna with the main object of pointing out to all those, that care to know, how these two paths are not mutually contradictory, how it is perfectly possible for men to be in the world and yet be not of it. Indeed, if such a thing is possible, it becomes the duty of every person, whether he is young or old, whether he is a follower of the Hindu religion or of any other religion of righteousness, to work to obtain command over the means by which it actually becomes possible for men to live in the world this kind of unworldly life. None of us can, if only we know our situation, afford to misunderstand what the *Gītā* teaches in respect of how we ought to conduct ourselves in life so as to be well *in* the world and at the same time be not *of* it. There may perhaps be some, in whose case the unmixed adoption of the path of renunciation and asceticism is good and helpful for religious realisation. But with the vast majority of men and women here, in whatsoever civilization they may have been brought up, the path of renunciation is seen to be in itself difficult and unsuitable, even as the path of living and labouring in society is found to be easier and more fitting. But this path of living and doing should not tend to burden the soul with such a weight of worldliness as will keep it pressed down to the earth and make it impossible for it to aspire to rise at all above the earthiness of the earth. In learning this lesson of living in the world without becoming too worldly, we not only help on the salvation of our own souls, but help on also the progress of civilization towards that divine consummation which God has in His wisdom ordained for mankind. The *Gītā* is, therefore, a work the study of which is incumbent upon the young and the old, upon the learned and the unlearned, upon those who know and believe as well as upon those who do not know and do not yet believe. Indeed it teaches one of the greatest lessons of life, the lesson of how we are to strive and to labour incessantly and be at the same time altogether unselfish so as to be freely helpful to our own moral progress and to the advancement of humanity. That being so, let us not rashly

misunderstand the purpose of this great and noble philosophical poem : but let us earnestly endeavour to know well how Śrī-Krishṇa practically solves this greatest of all ethical problems known to man, the problem of reconciling well the life of active work and achievement with the life of true renunciation and self-surrender.

There is one more point about which I wish to be permitted to say a few words now. There are some who say that the *Gītā* does not seem to have formed a part of the original *Mahābhāraṭa*, and that it is in all probability a later interpolation. The *Mahābhārata* is undoubtedly a work which shows clear signs of having grown in bulk by being added to from time to time; and it is no easy thing to arrange with absolute certainty the various parts of this massive epic in the chronological order of their introduction into the body thereof. But the criticism that the *Gītā* is an interpolation is evidently intended to mean something more, namely, that its teachings are too good to be genuinely Indian. One of the chief reasons for holding that the *Gītā* is an interpolation is that such a long philosophical discourse could not have been given to Arjuna in the battle-field just before the commencement of the great war. We find it stated in the *Mahābhārata*, that even after the teaching of the *Gītā* was over, Yudhishṭhira laid down his arms, removed his coat-of-mail, and covering himself with a cloth moved in silence towards where the enemy's army was, accompanied by his four brothers and by Śṛi-Krishṇa, went to Bhishma, Droṇa and other elderly leaders on the opposite side, and sought from each of them permission to fight in the war against him, which was accordingly given by all of them along with their blessings in addition. Yudhishṭhira then returned, put on again his coat of mail, and took up the weapons of war. Then it was that Bhīshma challenged the army of the Pāṇḍavas to fight, and the war actually commenced. This behaviour of Yudhishṭhira ought to tell us how the magnanimously chivalrous rules of war adopted in those days were such as made it impossible for either of the fighting parties to aim a blow at the other, when the men thereof were not yet fully prepared to fight. When such was the case, there is really no reason why this long discourse, or even a longer one, could not have been given in the battle-field, in spite of the great imminency of the war. Moreover, the idea that

Śrī-Kṛishṇa and Arjuna, when so near a great war, could not have turned their minds to an ordered and earnest examination of the philosophy of conduct is not at all convincing, in so far as the situation here is concerned. They often speak of what is known as death-bed conversion and death-bed repentance. What is really meant by such things is that, when a man is fully in sight of death, he realises, more readily than at other times, how important the coming life after death is, and how he has to prepare himself at once for that other life. The very imminence of the crisis is here responsible for the stimulation of the repentance and the production of the conversion. There can surely be no difficulty in our understanding that Arjuna must have felt that he was then in a highly critical situation in his life. That, in such a situation, he was prompted to think seriously about the philosophy of conduct, so as to ascertain whether, by fighting in the war and inflicting death upon so many men, he was not going to ruin his own destiny after death, appears to me to be natural enough. Such is obviously the reason why he shrank from at once rushing to fight, in spite of his knowledge that it was his duty to fight as a warrior in the cause of truth and justice and social welfare.

Again, it may be that the hereditarily contemplative character of the Hindu mind is also, to some extent, responsible for this kind of discussion having arisen at such a moment. The mind which is not hereditarily contemplative, might not, in such a grave crisis, think of the future at all, but might simply impel its owner to do the duty that lay nearest to his hand, irrespective of all consequences. But the temperament which, by understanding the serious character of an impending crisis, becomes contemplative and tries to ascertain what is right and what is wrong, before actually driving the soldier on into the battle-field and its bloody work, is generally granted to be peculiarly Indian. If it be true that, in India, the contemplative temperament has dominated her soldiers more than the rash or reckless temperament, then we have a particularly good reason to say that the *Gītā* is not at all an interpolation, in the sense that its teachings are borrowed from elsehewre and incoherently introduced into the *Mahābhārata*. Moreover, it is worth our while to ask in this connection whether there is any strong internal

evidence to hold that the *Gītā* is in this special sense an interpolation. The only kind of crucial internal evidence which may effectively be urged to prove, that the teaching given in the *Gītā* is not purely of Indian origin, is to show that it is not harmoniously in agreement with the teaching conveyed by the *Mahābhārata* as a whole. I believe that it is impossible to prove any such disagreement. On the other hand it is quite easy to demonstrate that the *Bhagavad-gītā* constitutes the very heart of the *Mahābhārata*. In the *Mahābhārata* itself, in the fifth chapter of the *Svargārōhaṇa-parvan*, there is a summary of the teaching of the *Mahābhārata* given in four *ślokas*; and it is said there that, after finishing the composition of the *Mahābhāratā*, Vyāsya, the author thereof, taught his son Śuka the gist of the whole epic thus:—

मातापितृसहस्राणि पुत्रदारशतानि च ।
संसारेष्वनुभूतानि यान्ति यास्यन्ति चापरे ॥
हर्षस्थानसहस्राणि भयस्थानशतानि च ।
दिवसे दिवसे मूढमाविशन्ति न पण्डितम् ॥
ऊर्ध्वबाहुर्विरौम्येष न च कश्चित् शृणोति मे ।
धर्मादर्थश्च कामश्च स किमर्थं न सेव्यते ॥
न जातु कामान्नभयान्न लोभाद्धर्मं त्यजेज्जीवितस्यापि हेतोः ।
नित्यो धर्मस्सुखदुःखे त्वनित्ये जीवो नित्यो हेतुरस्य त्वनित्यः ॥

"Thousands of mothers and fathers, hundreds of sons and of wives, who have all been lived with in the recurring life of reincarnation, are going; and (such) others will also go (alike hereafter). Day after day thousands of the sources of joy and hundreds of the sources of fear overtake the foolish man, but not the wise man. With uplifted arms I proclaim—and nobody listens to me—that wealth and enjoyments are derived from *dharma* (*i.e.*, the practice of virtue). Why is it then that it is not followed? Never should one, out of the desire for enjoyment or out of fear or covetousness, give up *dharma* —not even for the sake of one's life. *Dharma* is eternal; but pain and pleasure are transient. The soul is eternal, but the reason of its being thus (in this embodied condition) is transient." Such is the summary of the teaching intended to be conveyed by the

Mahābhārata as a whole; and you will be able to realise, as we proceed, how completely the *Gītā* is in good agreement with all the main lessons mentioned in this summary.

We are told, in the *Gītā* also, that we should not do anything against *dharma*, even though it be with the object of saving our own lives. The author of the *Mahābhārata* does not mean that men should give up all legitimate enjoyments in life and all worthy wealth well acquired. Both enjoyment and wealth are here pointed out by him to be derivable from *dharma*, and to be legitimately acceptable when so derived. And the *Gītā* also says that wealth and enjoyment so derived are always worthy of acceptance. Every man is at liberty to utilise honourably the opportunities of enjoyment which life affords to him in greater or less abundance, provided those opportunities come to him in accordance with a plan of life in which *dharma* is in no way violated. Thus what the *Gītā* teaches is fully in agreement with what constitutes the essence of the *Mahābhārata*, as summarised by Vyāsa. The contention that the *Bhagavadgītā* is an interpolation loses, therefore, much of its slily suggestive force. And to the man who, in spite of this agreement, holds the *Gītā* to be an interpolation and hence thinks that the operation of extraneous religious and moral forces is clearly visible in the work, we have no other answer to give than that this theory of interpolation is always more easily started than disproved, and that in fact there is no scripture forming the authoritative basis of any religion, which is not capable of being criticised as having many such important interpolations in it. I have read it stated that Christ's famous *Sermon On The Mount* is an interpolation in the Bible; and to those, who know how so much of the attractiveness of the teachings of Jesus is dependent upon this *Sermon*, the thinly veiled motive of iconoclastic destruction, which is really hidden in this criticism, becomes at once apparent. The Korān and the Tripiṭaka are also frequently criticised in this same manner and with this same object in view. Accordingly, we have to remember that the intrinsic value of either the *Bhagavadgītā* or the *Sermon On The Mount* suffers in no way, even if it is taken to be such an interpolation: and it is to this intrinsic value of the *Gītā* that we have really to turn our attention as earnest and sincere students of the philosophy of life and its divine consummation.

CHAPTER II.

IV

The first chapter, the study of which we concluded last week, is generally denoted, as you have been told, by the name of *Arjuna-vishāda-yōga*, which means that it is the chapter wherein sorrow and sadness may be seen to have overtaken Arjuna. In the course of the exposition of that chapter, I tried to point out to you the unwholesome and unjustifiable character of Arjuna's pity and grief in the situation, although those feelings arose out of his sympathy and love for his friends and relations. Then we dealt with one or two extraneous questions not very immediately related to the contents of the first chapter, and took into consideration certain criticisms which are sometimes directed against the *Bhagavadgītā* as a whole. Now we pass on to the study of the teachings which are contained in the second chapter. In this chapter Śrī-Kṛishṇa directly tells Arjuna that his sorrow and pity are vulgar and unworthy. To prove this to the satisfaction of Arjuna, Śrī-Kṛishṇa takes up the question of duty, as determined in relation to men's particular positions and responsiblities in life, which are in their turn dependent upon the power and the fitness which each of them possesses for serving the various ends of society and civilisation. In dealing with this question of duty, Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as you may presently see, begins his teaching with the exposition of the momentous philosophical problem of the immortality of the soul. To many people it may appear that this way of dealing with the question of duty, in the peculiar situation in which Arjuna then was, is rather strange, the strangeness consisting, not in that Śrī-Kṛishṇa was wrong in going thus to the very root of the matter, but in that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which is introduced in this place to justify the destruction of life in war, is apt to lead most ordinary people to wrong conclusions regarding the obligatoriness of the virtue of humanity in relation to duty. One of such conclusions is that, if killing in war is justifiable on the ground that the souls of those who are killed therein are immortal, then even murder may, on that same ground, be equally capable of justification. I point out this objection to you now, so that, when the proper time comes, (see lecture viii), we may be prepared to meet it and to

understand how Śrī-Kṛishṇa, in dealing with the question of conduct and duty, is right in going at once to the very foundation of all enduring ethics. Before beginning to expound, with all His authority, the true philosophy of conduct in earnest, Śrī-Krishṇa once again appeals to Arjuna's spirit of chivalry and sense of honour.

सञ्जय उवाच—

तं तथा कृपयाविष्टमश्रुपूर्णाकुलेक्षणम् ।
विषीदन्तमिदं वाक्यमुवाच मधुसूदनः ॥ १ ॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

कुतस्त्वा कश्मलमिदं विषमे समुपस्थितम् ।
अनार्यजुष्टमस्वर्ग्यमकीर्तिकरमर्जुन ॥ २ ॥
क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत् त्वय्युपपद्यते ।
क्षुद्रं हृदयदौर्बल्यं त्यक्त्वोत्तिष्ठ परन्तप ॥ ३ ॥

SAÑJAYA SAID :—

1. To him, who was thus overpowered by pity, whose eyes were tearful and disturbed, and who was so sorry, Kṛishṇa spoke this speech (that follows).

ŚRI-KṚISHṆA SAID :—

2. O Arjuna, why has this unworthy weakness, which is loved by those who are ignoble, which prevents one from going to *Svarga*, and which gives rise to disgrace, (why has this weakness) come upon you in this trying situation?

3. Do not get into unmanliness, O Arjuna! That is not worthy in your case. Cast off the vulgar weakness of the heart and arise, O chastiser of enemies!

Observe how Śrī-Kṛishṇa still continues appealing to the nobler sentiments and emotions of Arjuna as a great prince and a heroic warrior. It is indeed through cultured emotions and sentiments that men and women are spontaneously led along the noble path of

high character and true benevolence ; and when a fervent appeal to the higher sentiments of a chivalrous man of honour fails in evoking response, it cannot but mean that the inner moral conflict, caused by the conscience in his heart, is too strong to be easily overcome. *Svarga* is the heaven of Indra and the other Vēdic gods, and is at the same time the Valhala of Indian heroes. To die in battle heroically has hence been conceived to be capable of elevating one almost to the level of the gods. Even the glory of a grand divine ascent to *Svarga* could not enable Arjuna to get over the depression caused in him by his misconceived and mis-directed pity and sadness.

अर्जुन उवाच—

कथं भीष्ममहं संख्ये द्रोणं च मधुसूदन ।
इषुभिः प्रतियोत्स्यामि पूजार्हावरिसूदन ॥ ४ ॥

ARJUNA SAID :—

4. O Krishṇa, how can I, in battle, attack with arrows Bhīshma and Drōṇa, both of whom deserve to be worshipped (by me), O destroyer of enemies ?

Here let me draw your attention to a slight change in the attitude of Arjuna. Having understood that Śrī-Krishṇa was not willing to allow him to go on in such a state of mental weakness and despondency, Arjuna now places before Śrī-Krishṇa, not the harm of killing his own kindred, nor the possibility of sin accruing to him from such a deed of destruction, nor again the fear of causing *varṇa-saṅkara*, but the infamy of having to kill Bhīshma and Drōṇa, who truly deserve worship and honour at his hands. Arjuna apparently thought that, if not out of respect for his contention regarding the harmfulness and inutility of the destruction of life to be dealt out in the war, at least out of regard for the feeling of reverence which he was bound to show to elders and teachers, Śrī-Krishṇa might allow him to withdraw from doing this undesirable and unattractive duty of slaughter in the great war. Śrī-Krishṇa's appeal to Arjuna's sentiment of chivalry, to his heroism and love of glory was thus met by him by a similar appeal to another sentiment which is no less potent. And in condemnation of the irreverent slaughter of those who deserved to be worshipped and honoured, he said further—

गुरूनहत्वा हि महानुभावान् श्रेयो भोक्तुं भैक्ष्यमपीह लोके ।
हत्वार्थकामांस्तु गुरूनिहैव भुञ्जीय भोगान् रुधिरप्रदिग्धान् ॥ ५ ॥
न चैतद्विद्मः कतरन्नो गरीयो यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयुः ।
यानेव हत्वा न जिजीविषामस्तेऽवस्थिताः प्रमुखे धार्तराष्ट्राः ॥ ६ ॥
कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः ।
यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥७॥
न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुद्याद्यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
अवाप्य भूमावसपत्नमृद्धं राज्यं सुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥ ८ ॥

5. Indeed, for the sake of not having killed (these) honoured elders, even to eat of the food of beggary is preferable here in this world. But after killing (these) elders, who, however, are attached to wealth, I shall verily have to enjoy here (only) such enjoyments as are well dipped in blood.

6. We do not know which of us is the stronger, whether we shall win or they shall conquer us. Those very sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra, after killing whom we may have no desire to live (at all), stand firmly in front of us (ready for the battle).

7. I, with (my very) nature impaired by the fault of weakness (in will and heart), and greatly perplexed in mind in respect of the duty (to be done), entreat you. Tell me with certainty that which shall be good (for me to do). I am your disciple; command me, who have come unto you (for guidance).

8. Surely, I do not see what can, even after I obtain on earth a kingdom free from enemies and laden with abundance, and (obtain) also the supreme rulership over the gods (themselves), possibly drive away this grief of mine, which is drying up (all my) senses.

In this manner Arjuna slowly surrendered himself to Śri-Kṛishṇa, and asked Him to teach him what was right and to guide him in the performance of the duty he then had to do. From this it is evident that the protest of Śri-Kṛishṇa against Arjuna's weakness did finally tell upon him effectively. "My nature", Arjuna seems to say in fact, "has become clouded with the error due to my mental weakness; and having my mind unsettled owing to my inability to make out what the right thing is for me to do in this trying situation, I ask you to teach me my duty and to show me the way to do it". When he thus granted that his nature had become clouded with the error due to his mental weakness, he was to a certain extent willing to own that the conduct, which he proposed to himself, and his then determination to withdraw from the battle-field were not quite appropriate. The reason why his mind became clouded with the error of weakness is that it was *dharma sammuḍha*, that is, perplexed as to what duty was. You know they often speak in Sanskrit of *dharma-saṅkaṭa* or conflict of duties; and Arjuna now felt that he had to face a conflict of duties in a trying situation. To that conflict he naturally drew Śri-Kṛishṇa's attention. It must be unnecessary to point out to you that the man who is troubled by a conflict of duties is morally very different from the man who wantonly ignores his duties. The former is both earnest and sincere, while the latter is indeed neither. Arjuna here says that he is Śri-Kṛishṇa's disciple, and that he surrenders himself unto Him to receive teaching and guidance at His hands. It has been the traditional practice of teachers in this country to declare that true discipleship consists in the disciple's serious earnestness to know what *dharma* is, and also in his firm and sincere conviction that, till he knows that, he cannot be happy and cannot have peace. True discipleship further consists in the disciple surrendering himself unto his *guru*, so as to place himself freely at his disposal and command. The disciple is expected to be pliable like clay in the hands of the potter, so that the master may make of him anything which appears to him to be good and at the same time just and beautiful. If, however, a disciple offers, even though unconsciously, any unnatural resistance to the influence of the *guru* on his mind, then the teaching bestowed on such a disciple cannot be assuredly productive of the best results. In such a resistance there is even a more serious danger, in that it tends to make

the disciple suspicious and hypercritical. When the relation of the disciple to the teacher is of a distrustful and intractable character then, even though the teacher happens to be good as well as great and wise, it is hard for him to exercise the needed influence and confer the required illumination on the mind of the disciple. It is therefore rightly insisted that the mental attitude of the disciple should more generally be that of the learner than that of the critic. By this it is not, of course, meant that the disciple should not, in his relations with the teacher, exercise his own reason and power of thought and judgment. We shall see, as we go on, how Arjuna puts questions to Śrī-Kṛishṇa very frequently, and how He, time after time, replies calmly to Arjuna's questions, and how, after the whole teaching of the *Gītā* is over, Śrī-Kṛishṇa calls upon Arjuna to consider well all that he was taught and then to do his duty aright in the light of his own judgment. From this we have to learn that it is not the surrender of the reasoning power that is expected of a disciple, but it is the putting aside of that unwholesome attitude of mind which is recalcitrant or unimpressionably hard and hypercritical. Reverence for the teacher is therefore a very highly valuable quality in the life of the disciple who is true and worthy; it adds to the efficacy of the educating power of the teacher, and helps on the progress of the disciple in the attainment of such self-knowledge and self-discipline as will enable him to know his duty aright and also to do it always well. The freedom, which the ideal teacher has to bestow upon the ideal disciple to exercise his own judgment, cannot at all be curtailed without weakening thereby the disciple's sense of his own responsibility to know the truth and to do the right. It is further worthy of note here that, even after declaring himself to be the disciple of Śrī-Kṛishṇa and placing himself at His disposal for guidance, Arjuna again gives expression to his own conviction that it is not good for him to fight in the war. This means that he does not surrender his individuality alogether in becoming a disciple. Ordinarily, if one has specially strong convictions, one finds it hard to be at the same time ready to learn also. But, as we have seen, the truly ideal disciple has to combine well within himself real strength of conviction with an open readiness to learn. Such a combination of qualities is distinctly noticeable here in relation to Arjuna; and

that is why he is so often looked upon as the type of an ideal disciple.

सञ्जय उवाच—

एवमुक्त्वा हृषीकेशं गुडाकेशः परन्तपः ।
न योत्स्य इति गोविन्दमुक्त्वा तूष्णीं बभूव ह ॥ ९ ॥

SAÑJAYA SAID:—

9. Arjuna, the chastiser of foes, having thus spoken to Krishṇa, declared to Krishṇa—"I will not fight"—and (then) became surprisingly silent.

After having placed himself as a disciple at the disposal of Śrī-Krishṇa, Arjuna grew increasingly emphatic in his own determination, and said— "I will not fight". Then, after saying so, he became wonderfully silent. What is the meaning of this? In this declaration and in the silence following it, we may clearly see the strength of his conviction as also the proof of his having placed himself freely at the disposal of Śrī-Krishṇa. He made it thus evident to Śrī-Krishṇa that he was determined not to fight, and that he was at the same time earnestly willing to listen to whatever wise teaching Śrī-Krishṇa might give him for his guidance.

तमुवाच हृषीकेशः प्रहसन्निव भारत ।
सेनयोरुभयोर्मध्ये विषीदन्तमिदं वचः ॥ १० ॥

10. (Then), O descendant of Bharata, Krishṇa, as if smilingly, addressed to him (Arjuna), who was feeling so sorry between the two armies, these (following) words.

Why did Śrī-Krishṇa smile in such a serious situation? When a disciple appeals pathetically and in an aggressively assertive manner for help and guidance at the hands of his teacher, then the very assertiveness of the disciple is surely calculated to provoke a smile. If we understand how Arjuna is so assertive in spite of his imperfect knowledge, and how at the same time he is also willing to learn, we cannot fail to make out that the smile of Śrī-Krishṇa is

perfectly natural and highly significant. Indeed such a smile will be the more marked, the greater the good temper of the teacher. Good temper on the part of the teacher is always of value in making his teaching really tell well. If the teacher is easily irritated by the assertive ignorance of the disciple, who has yet to learn much, then invariably such a teacher becomes repulsive, and the heart of the disciple will not open out freely to him; and then it naturally becomes almost impossible for the teacher to introduce anything of value into it. Such a relation between the teacher and the taught is sure to be fruitless and abortive. Śrī-Kṛishṇa obviously knew the great importance of what He had to teach to all persons of all countries and ages through Arjuna; and He did not therefore want to imperil the immediate acceptability of His teaching by weakening the receptive mood and learning capacity of His then disciple Arjuna in any manner. The reason why Śrī-Krishṇa smiled is evidently to have the heart of Arjuna as widely open as possible to receive His momentously important teachings. We may further remember here that this smile of His could not have been altogether unrelated to the ridiculousness of Arjuna's cocksure ignorance.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

अशोच्यानन्वशोचस्त्वं प्रज्ञावादांश्च भाषसे ।
गतासूनगतासूंश्च नानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥ ११ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID:—

11. You are sorrowing for those who do not deserve to be sorrowed for; and you utter the rationalistic arguments (of the wiseling). Really wise and learned persons do not feel sorry either for those whose lives are lost or for those whose lives are not lost.

With this *śloka* commences Śrī-Kṛishṇa's high and mighty endeavour to teach the philosophy of conduct to Arjuna; and here at the very commencement of this teaching, it may well be asked why there need be sorrow in relation to those who have not lost their lives. There are schools of philosophy in which it is held that not to be born is the best lot, and that the next best is to die

as soon as one may. But apart from these schools of pessimistic philosophy, we often find that, in the life of many men here on earth, there arise so many opportunities for suffering and for sorrowing. You may remember how in that summary of the *Mahābhārata*, which I quoted to you in our last class, it is declared that thousands of opportunities for joy and hundreds of opportunities for fear and sorrow turn up in the life of the fool day after day, but that they do not so turn up in the life of the wise man. It cannot be denied that in life there is often room enough for suffering and for sorrow. Living is, moreover, in itself a great responsibility; and bearing well the burden of life, as it is commonly said, is never a light affair. The trials that come upon individuals, when they endeavour to bear their burden of life aright, are very often exacting, if not overwhelming. Therefore, even in relation to those, who have not lost their lives, there may be ample scope for feeling sorry. Nevertheless, the wise man ought never to feel sorry either for the living or for the dead. The idea is that, since, as taught distinctly in the *Mahabhārata*, the soul is immortal, immaterial and real, while the body, within which the soul is encased, and all the feelings of pleasure and pain, of sorrow and of joy, are all unreal and transient, the wise man ought not to care much for these transient unrealities in the conduct of his own life. Such is the real meaning of this *slōka*. If the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra are killed, what does it mean? It means that the souls, which are now embodied as the sons of Dhṛitarāshṭra, become, thereby, separated from their present bodies, and that, when they become so separated, they suffer nothing in the way of real or serious loss, for which it is worthy on the part of a wise man to feel sorry. That this is the meaning conveyed here is brought out more distinctly in the following *ślōkas*.

न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ १२ ॥

12. It never was when I was not, nor (when) you and all these kings (were not); and surely it is not that all of us shall not be hereafter.

Observe well what this statement means. It clearly amounts to saying that in the past there was no time when we were not,

and that in the future there will be no time when we shall not be. That we *are* now requires no demonstration. But it is not so easy to realise that we *were* always in the past or that we *shall be* always in the future. This statement can be true of us only if we are immortal and eternal. That we have always been in the past, even as we *are* in the present, and that similarly we shall always be in the future, can, therefore, hold true only in relation to that, which, being other than our body, constitutes the very essence of our existence; for the body is subject to birth, growth, decay and death. Such an essential something is here in the next *śloka* declared to exist in us.

देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे कौमारं यौवनं जरा ।
तथा देहान्तरप्राप्तिर्धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति ॥ १३ ॥

13. In whatsoever manner the embodied (soul) has childhood, youth and old age in relation to this (present) body, in that same manner does it obtain another body. The brave man does not become faint-hearted thereat.

The *dêhin* is the embodied soul conceived to be the owner of the body. In relation to the body owned by the embodied soul, alterations in condition are actually observed to take place, such as childhood, youth and old age. These changes in condition occur only in relation to the body, but not in relation to what constitutes the soul within the body. In so far as the soul within the body is concerned, it remains the same unaltered being from the very beginning to the very end of every one of its embodied states of existence, such things as childhood, youth and old age being not at all conceivable in relation to the soul. The passage of the embodiments of the embodied soul from condition to condition is quite common and perfectly natural; and we are now called upon here to understand that the passage of the embodied soul from one embodiment to another is also equally natural. If, while all this variation in the condition of the embodiment is going on, the unity of the soul can and does remain unmarred, then why may not this same unity of the soul continue to be unmarred even when the soul passes from

one embodiment to another? This is a question to which it is really not easy to give anything like a completely convincing answer. Nevertheless—धीरस्तत्र न मुह्यति—the brave man does not feel faint-hearted thereat. The really brave man, who has succeeded in knowing the truth relating to the immortality of the soul and its enduring reality, cannot feel baffled in facing this problem of the soul's reincarnation. Only he would feel baffled in facing this problem of the soul's reincarnation—he, who thinks that, with the death of the body, there is the death of the soul also. How closely the doctrine of the immortality of the soul is connected with the problem of its re-incarnation, it is always well to bear in mind. To believe in the immortality of the soul and to deny at the same time its reincarnation requires, as I understand, a much stronger effort of blind faith than of clear reason. To know that the soul is essentially real and different from the body is to know that it is immutable and immortal; and to know that it is immortal is at least to know that it is neither impossible nor unnatural for it to become re-incarnated.

मात्रास्पर्शास्तु कौन्तेय शीतोष्णसुखदुःखदाः ।
आगमापायिनोऽनित्यास्तांस्तितिक्षस्व भारत ॥ १४ ॥

14. Those things, which give rise to (the sensations of) heat and cold and to (the feelings of) pain and pleasure, are, however, of limited contact (in relation to the soul); being transient, they are characterised by coming and going. Bear them with firmness, O Arjuna!

The embodiment of the soul is here conceived to be in contact with the soul; and it is this contact, which makes the embodiment the means by which the sensations of heat and cold and the feelings of pain and pleasure are all experienced by the soul. Since that which gives rise to these feelings and sensations is not constant and eternal, and since whatever is not constant and eternal is not real, the embodiment which happens to be the reason of our feelings and sensations is not real. Therefore, we have patiently and firmly to put up with these experiences as they come, and ought not to make pain and pleasure the criteria of our conduct

in life. This is, in the philosophy of conduct which Śrī-Kṛishṇa has taught us, a noteworthy point of importance. From very ancient times in this country there have been atheistic secularists known as *Chārvākas*, who have held the opinion, like certain well-known modern thinkers of their type, that pain and pleasure alone ought to be the ultimate criteria of conduct. According to this view, whatever is pleasant has to be good, and whatever is painful has to be bad. This, of course, is not the ethical position adopted in the philosophy of Hinduism.

यं हि न व्यथयन्त्येते पुरुषं पुरुषर्षभ ।
समदुःखसुखं धीरं सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥ १५ ॥

15. That brave man whom, O chief among men, these (limited material contacts) do not afflict, and to whom pain and pleasure are alike,—he becomes fitted for immortality.

Here is another point worthy of note. We have already been told that you and I and every one else are all eternal. But, then, what is the meaning of the statement that only he is fit to attain immortality, who is brave enough to discard pleasure and pain as the criteria of conduct and to be altogether unmoved by them? The soul, in its own nature, is immortal; but, owing to what is known as *karma*, it becomes associated with a body, and, in consequence, subject to the influence of those transient material contacts which give rise to pleasure and pain. It is owing to this association with the body that the soul, which is embodied therein, is often mistaken to be born and to die. This mistaken apprehension of the soul, owing to which it seems to be subject to birth and growth and decay and death, is hence entirely caused by its association with the material body; and therefore it is only when this association is severed, that it becomes possible for the soul to be seen in its own essential nature, unpolluted by the contact of anything which is of a completely contrary character. It is such a full freedom of the soul from the limiting influences of the material body, that is here denoted by the term *amṛitatva*, which I have translated as 'immortality'. The soul which is essentially immortal can well

realise its own immortality, only when mortality ceases to touch it altogether even as an extraneous and accidental attribute. Moreover, we are told here by implication, as I have indicated already, the reason why the soul gets into a material embodiment at all. If we know how the soul becomes free from the limiting conditions of a material embodiment, it ought to be logically easy for us to learn through inference how it is that it gets into such an embodiment at all. They say that contrary causes necessarily produce contrary effects. If to command such an equanimity of mind, as makes one be free from pain and pleasure and their motive power in relation to action, happens to be the means by which the soul is liberated from its material imprisonment, then it follows naturally that our proneness to be agitated by those pleasures and pains, which result from the transient contact of the material embodiment with the immaterial soul, must be the cause that imposes the limitations of the embodiment upon the unlimited soul.

I draw your attention in this manner to this question of the bondage of the soul, which is only the other side of the question of its immortality, with the object of pointing out to you that, in endeavouring to convince Arjuna that there is nothing seriously wrong in his having to fight in the war and kill the enemies, Śrī-Kṛishṇa does not at all base his argument exclusively on the immortality of the soul. The truth of the immortality of the soul is indeed one of the basic principles on which His philosophy of conduct is made to rest. But it is only one of them; for we have to understand that Śrī-Kṛishṇa clearly meant to teach Arjuna that the reason why our soul, which is in itself immaterial and immortal, continues to be subject to the limitations of a material embodiment, which is mutable and mortal, consists in our placing ourselves at the disposal of the effects of those material contacts, which the soul has come to experience in consequence of its very association with such an embodiment. When a man freely places himself at the disposal of the tendencies arising from these material contacts, then the bondage of his soul in matter is confirmed, continued and strengthened. When, however, he so lives his life that the pains and pleasures, resulting from the contact of his soul with the material body, do not at all trouble him and that he throughout exhibits the needed power of will and

strength of character to look upon all pains and pleasures with equal indifference, then it is that the bondage of his soul may be effectively terminated. In brief, we have to know that the soul is eternal, real and immaterial, that the limiting conditions which its material embodiment imposes upon it are transient, unessential and changing, and that it is in the power of the soul either to allow this material bondage to go on or to make it cease altogether.

नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः ।
उभयोरपि दृष्टोऽन्तस्त्वनयोस्तत्त्वदर्शिभिः ॥ १६ ॥

16. That, which is not, has no existence; that, which is, has no non-existence. The final truth regarding both of these is seen by those who have seen the reality.

In this *ślōka* the contrast between the transient, unessential and changing character of material conditions, and the eternal, real and immutable character of the soul is most clearly brought out. It looks like a truism to say that that, which is not, does not exist, and that that, which is, is not non-existent. The intention here is chiefly that of contrasting the soul, which is real and unchanging and therefore truly existent, with its material embodiment, which is mutable and unessential and therefore non-existent. In other words, what is not real cannot endure, in the manner in which that which is real can endure; the soul is real in itself and therefore endures, while the body is unessential in relation to the soul and therefore cannot endure like it. This idea may also be expressed in another manner thus:—The body does not endure, and therefore it is unreal and unessential in relation to the soul; but the soul itself endures, and therefore it is both real and essential. We are told here that that is how wise men understand the truth of things and discern the ultimate nature of reality and unreality. The next *ślōka* deals with another important aspect of the nature of the soul and its relation to matter, an aspect which requires some amount of careful thought before it can be completely comprehended. Let us, therefore, postpone its consideration to our next class.

V

You know already how Śri-Kṛishṇa began in earnest to meet the objections of Arjuna to fight in the great war with the enunciation of the important philosophical doctrine of the immortality and eternity of the soul. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul asserts the unchanging reality of the soul as distinct from the mutability of matter, and thus postulates by implication the immateriality of the soul. In the portion of the *Gītā*, which we have to study to-day, Śrī-Kṛishṇa particularly deals with the immateriality and immutability of the soul. Now it is with this *ślōka* that we begin our work to-day :—

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्तुमर्हति ॥ १७ ॥

17. Do you, however, know that that, by which the whole of this (universe) is pervaded, is indestructible. No one is capable of causing the destruction of this, which is (so) indestructible.

Notice that in this *ślōka* there are two things mentioned—the whole of the universe, and something else which is said to pervade it. Notice also that indestructibility is given as the attribute of that which pervades, while that which is pervaded is conceived to be destructible. What is meant by destruction here is not annihilation; it is not the conversion of an existing something into a non-existing nothing. The idea of destruction, in so far as destructible material things are concerned, implies nothing more than mere mutation or a marked change from condition to condition. This conception regarding the nature of the destruction of material bodies is borne out by modern science also, as you must be well aware of. One of the cardinal doctrines underlying modern physical science is what is known as the doctrine of the conservation of matter or of the indestructibility of matter. It means that matter, as matter, can never be converted into no-matter. In other words, you can only modify the conditions in which matter exists, but you can never destroy it or annihilate it into no-matter. If that doctrine of

modern science is well kept in mind, there can indeed be no difficulty in understanding what the *Gītā* means here. Destruction and death in relation to all embodied entities simply means mutation in condition in regard to their material embodiments. Now, as between the pervader and the pervaded, the pervaded is destructible, inasmuch as it is capable of undergoing mutation, while the pervader is incapable of undergoing mutation and is therefore indestructible.

Is the whole universe really pervaded by the soul? And, if so, is that soul one or many? You know that these questions are of very great importance in philosophy. Here it is distinctly stated that the whole universe is pervaded by the soul; and it is worthy of note that the words *avināśin* and *avyaya*, as referring to the indestructible pervader, are used in the singular number. That they are used in the singular number need not, however, necessarily imply that what pervades the whole universe is only a single soul. Such an inference does not seem to be inevitable in the context. For, in one of the *ślōkas*, which we studied in our last class, Arjuna was told that there was no time when he and Śrī-Kṛishṇa and all the other princes and men assembled there for the war were not, and that there would be no time in future when all these might not be. In this context the plural number is used, and a clear distinction is made between *you* and *I* and *others*; and the natural inference that one may draw from it is that a plurality of souls is there intended to be postulated. Those who adopt the *advaita* or the monistic interpretation of the Vēdānta in this country, and according to whom there is no plurality of souls in reality, urge that the plural use of the words in this context is not intended to signify a plurality of souls in reality. If the plural use of the terms signifying souls in embodiment need not always represent a plurality of souls in essential reality, the singular use of *avināśin* and *avyaya* in this *ślōka*, which we are now trying to interpret, need not also in an exactly similar manner indicate the unity of the pervading soul. If we further understand that, in Sanskrit, there is the use of what is called the *jātyēkavachana*, according to which the whole of a collection of things of the same kind may be expressed by means of a singular noun, then the singular

use of words denoting the soul may very well imply a plurality of souls in certain contexts, such as the one now under consideration. Therefore, whether the *Gītā* upholds the one position of thought or the other in this respect, it is not possible to determine definitely from considerations like these. Interpretation alone is not certainly adequate to settle this great question of psychological research and philosophic enquiry.

In considering how the whole universe may be pervaded by the soul, we are naturally prompted to ascertain how far it is possible for even 'dead' matter to be possessed of consciousness. If the whole universe is pervaded by the soul, then it is evidently necessary that the universe must be throbbing everywhere with life and be throughout characterised by consciousness. So far as modern research has been able to ascertain the truth about this, we cannot say that the universe is not so throbbing with life and is not manifesting consciousness in all its parts. I have stated this position of modern science advisedly in this negative manner, because I do not believe that it has been as yet conclusively demonstrated by modern science that the whole universe is really infilled with consciousness. However, there is really much less like proof to show that the universe is not so infilled with consciousness. Professor J. C. Bose has distinctly demonstrated that it is not only organic, living matter which responds to electric stimulation, but that what we have been considering till now to be dead matter is also capable of responding similarly to such stimulation. Metals, for instance, respond to such a stimulation; and what is remarkable here is that the manner in which metals respond to electric stimulation is exactly the same as that in which living organic matter responds to it. And more wonderful than even this is that, just as, by the operation of poisons, the power of living organic matter to respond to electric stimulation is killed, so also is the power of 'dead' metals to respond to such a stimulation seen to be killed by the operation of the same poisons. What is the meaning of this experimental result? I remember having read, at the time when the result of Professor Bose's researches was published, a criticism in one of our Madras journals—which obviously wanted to belittle the value of his work and discovery— to the effect that it tended to

give a kind of scientific support to pantheism. We Hindus certainly need not be afraid of any such tendency. If scientific investigation, conducted according to the strict canons of scientific method, gives rise to such results as will compel us to believe in pantheism, then by all means we will accept pantheism. By so doing we in no way endanger our historic religious life or our immemorial sacred institutions. I am sure people in India are not so very much in dread of pantheism, as others elsewhere are known to be, particularly when its chances to prove true happen to improve in value. I do not mean to say that the result of the investigations conducted by Professor Bose has conclusively established the pantheistic conception of the universe to be the only true conception. But what I mean to point out is that our conception of what constitues life, that is, of what distinguishes living and conscious beings from inert non-living beings, must either be modified, or we must grant that even 'dead' matter is in fact alive and conscious. Till now physiologists were largely under the impression that living organisms alone responded to external stimulation. Professor Bose's researches either lead us to the conclusion that metals and other such 'dead' inorganic bodies are also alive and conscious, or they compel us to find out some other test of what it is that essentially constitutes life, and how it is that we should distinguish conscious life from unconscious no-life. What there is in store for man in the yet undisclosed future of scientific enquiry, it is not possible for anybody to prophesy. However, it is fully worthy of note that we have been enabled to see that there is a certain something resembling consciousness, which bridges in a marked manner the apparent gulf between 'living' and 'non-living' matter.

Moreover, the physical analysis of the universe gives us ultimately matter and energy and space and time, as the elements thereof, while its psychological analysis gives us ultimately the ego and the non-ego or the subject and the object as its constituent parts. The subjective world is known in Sanskrit as *asmatprapañcha* or *pratyakprapañcha*, and the objective world is known as *yushmatprapañcha* or *parākprapañcha*. Evidently the physicist's analysis of the universe takes only the objective world into consideration, and the subjective world is not at all dealt with therein. Therefore

there is a something else which the psychologist gives us over and above what the physicist does, and which also we have to take into account. This other something, the inner "ego" of the psychologist, may hence be seen to be certainly other than all that is to be found in the outer analysis of the universe by the physicist. According to Sanskrit psychologists the *ahampadārtha* is *chaitanyasvarūpa.* That is, they maintain that the ego is essentially of the nature of consciousness. It is *ajaḍa* or non-inert, and, therefore, *svayamprakāśa* or self-luminous. It is indeed this principle of consciousness which really constitutes the basis of the subjective world of the psychologist. This principle of consciousness, this basis of the "I" in each of us, is after all what is conceived here to be the root-reality of the soul. By and by we shall learn further details regarding the characteristics of the soul. The *Gītā* enables us to see how the reality of the soul may be tested by certain psychological experiments specially devised for that purpose, and also how the analysis of the functions of human consciousness necessarily leads to the postulation of the soul. But, in the meanwhile, it is of great importance for us to know that what is meant by soul is not in essence anything far different from this principle of consciousness. In fact it must be this principle of consciousness, which is here, in the *ślōka* under consideration, declared to pervade the whole universe. You know that there are schools of philosophy, which endeavour to prove either that consciousness is a product of matter and energy or that matter and energy are themselves products of consciousness. But it is not in any way necessary for us to reduce either matter into consciousness or consciousness into matter, so long as it is impossible to arrive at such a reduction in a perfectly scientific and logically satisfactory manner. Accordingly, we are bound to consider matter and consciousness to be essentially different entities, although they are always in close association with each other, in the same manner in which we look upon matter and energy as being distinct from each other, even though they are always in mutual association. Hence we have to come to the conclusion that the principle of consciousness is different from matter and energy, that, in spite of this difference, it is in universal association with matter, and that this universality of the association of consciousness with matter does not in any manner imply that they are

essentially identical. Therefore, this idea that the whole of the universe is pervaded by consciousness cannot be easily rejected by any one as being insupportable or unscientific. If, in this manner, the idea of the universal pervasion of consciousness happens to be satisfactorily maintainable, the next question that naturally arises is one to which I have already alluded, namely, whether this principle of consciousness which pervades the universe is really one in being, or whether it consists of a multiplicity of separate but essentially similar souls, through whose pervasion the universe may well be conceived as being pervaded throughout by the principle of consciousness. But we need not enter into an examination of this question as it has no direct bearing on the context which we are now studying, and as also it has given rise to strong sectarian differences of opinion among our leading religious thinkers and teachers. In fact it is the difference between the pervader and the pervaded which is intended to be explained in this *ślōka*; and we have been told that we can distinguish the pervader from the pervaded by knowing that, of these two, the pervader alone is immutable and indestructible. Who, indeed, can destroy the indestructible? When the essential reality of all living beings is thus by nature indestructible, surely death can never mean anything like the annihilation of the appointed destiny of the soul.

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ताः शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद्युद्ध्यस्व भारत ॥ १८ ॥

18. These bodies of the eternal embodied (soul), which is imperishable and immeasurable, have (all) been declared to be finite: do you therefore fight, O descendant of Bharata!

The word *śarīrin*, like *dēhin*, means the owner of the body, which owner is, as you know, the soul or the indwelling ego-ised principle of consciousness. This owner of the body is here conceived to have been in possession of many bodies one after another, which have all been finite and subject to the process of inevitably coming to an end, while their owner has not been finite like them but has always been unchangeable and eternal. This owner

is also immeasurable, or, in other words, he is not capable of being comprehended fully and definitely by our intelligence. The distinction between the soul and the body is not merely that the soul pervades the body, while the body is pervaded by the soul; but the soul is further to be understood as being indestructible, eternal, and unmeasurable. This knowledge of the essential difference between the body and the soul is spoken of in Sanskrit as *dehātmavivēka*; and it cannot be hard to see how, without it, it is quite impossible to establish by due demonstration the immortality of the soul. There is another point in this *ślōka* to which I have to draw your attention; and that is in reference to the injunction—*tasmādyuddhyasva*—"do you therefore fight". From this *therefore* found here, one may draw the conclusion that Śrī-Kṛishṇa tried to induce Arjuna to fight in the war, basing the whole of his argument on this single question of the immortality of the soul. That conclusion would be true, if this *ślōka* really gave us the full and final statement of the argument urged by Śrī-Kṛishṇa to induce this unwilling warrior to fight. But, as we know, the argument is not concluded here, but is continued still further. Consequently, as almost all our commentators on the *Gītā* point out, the *therefore* here is not intended to denote the culmination of the whole argument; it only points out that one step in the argument has been fairly brought to a close. After thus establishing the distinction between the body and the soul, Śrī-Kṛishṇa proceeds to describe the characteristics of the soul more fully:—

य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ १९ ॥

19. Whoever understands this (soul) to be the killer, and whoever thinks it to be the killed, both of them do not know (the truth); it does not kill, nor is (it) killed.

Part of this *ślōka* tells us that the act of killing, of which the body alone is the object, has also the body for its agent but not the soul. To see well the truth of this statement, we have to understand the following chain of reasoning. The soul is, in its essential nature, immortal and immutable. Nevertheless, it is in association

with mortal and mutable matter. This association is due to what is commonly called the *karma* of the embodied soul, arising from the activities of its previous conditions of incarnated life. That the soul has had other bodies at other times to dwell in, is thus made to be responsible for its present association with matter; and this association may also go on in its coming conditions of reincarnation owing to the *karma* produced by its present and past lives. Where the past lives are responsible for the present one, and this as well as the past lives are in their turn responsible for future ones, we clearly have a chain of causes which is both beginningless and endless. Therefore, the question remains unanswered as to why it is that the soul first came to be at all associated with matter. In distinct recognition of this difficulty, the Vēdānta maintains that *karma* is *anādi* or beginningless, which of course means that it is incapable of being traced back to its very first origin. According to the *Vēdāntin*, it is *karma* that is responsible for the continued association of the soul with matter; and every embodied life of the soul subjects it more or less to all sorts of material limitations. Although the *Vēdāntin* cannot trace *karma* back to its very beginning, still he distinctly declares that, if any embodied soul chooses as well as manages to live a life of perfect unselfishness and non-attachment to the fruits of work, then it is possible for that soul to shake off all these limitations and become free from material bondage. There is a passage in one of our *Upanishads*, which says that, when all the desires in the heart of a man are given up, then the mortal man becomes immortal and attains the *Brahman* even here in this very life. Accordingly, we are now called upon to see that the agent that kills is really the body which carries with it the power of work as well as the impress of *karma*, even as the object which is killed is in fact such a body. We again have to take up this question soon for further consideration.

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता वा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ २० ॥

20. This (soul) is never born, nor does (it) ever die; not having been brought into being (at any time) before, it will not (newly) come into existence (at any

time) again. This unborn, immortal, eternal and ancient (soul) is not killed, when the body is slain.

The distinction between the material body and the immaterial soul is further emphasised in this *ślōka*. The owner of the body, the soul, is never born and never dies. What is the meaning of birth and death? To be born is to come into the state of existence from the preceding state of non-existence; and to die is to pass into the state of non-existence from the immediately preceding state of existence. That the soul is never born and never dies, therefore, means that it does not pass into the condition of existence from any immediately preceding condition of non-existence, and that it does not similarly pass into the condition of non-existence from a previous condition of real existence. That is, having been once before, it never ceases to be again; and not having been once before, it never comes into being thereafter. The soul is, therefore, unborn, immortal, eternal and ancient. Accordingly this unborn, immortal, eternal and ancient soul is not killed, when any embodied being is killed; but it is merely the body which is then killed, because this is not unborn, or immortal, or eternal, or ancient. Let it be noted here that, even in the case of the body, death cannot mean its annihilation, or its conversion into nothing. On the other hand it only means mutation, change of collocation and configuration. Similarly the birth of the body may also be ultimately understood to be a kind of material mutation. Hence what we are called upon to realise well here in this context is chiefly the immutability of the reality which we call soul. Indeed the very reality of the soul is conceived to consist in its immutability; and it is this characteristic freedom from mutation, which differentiates it from all other entities that are found in the world of human experience.

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजमव्ययम् ।
कथं स पुरुषः पार्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम् ॥ २१ ॥

21. He who knows this unborn and imperishable (soul) to be indestructible and eternal, how and whom, O Arjuna, does that man cause to be slain, and (how and) whom does he slay?

To be convinced of the immortality of the soul is to be fully alive to its unkillability; and when, along with this conviction, it is realised that the unkillable soul is the owner of the killable body and is as such the sovereign reality, the infliction of death under the dictation of duty cannot mean anything more than merely killing the killable body and leaving the unkillable soul absolutely untouched, alive and whole. When death does not thus mean the destruction of what constitutes the reality of our being, its infliction has very naturally a less serious import than when it means the destruction of such reality. Hence it is that duty may well enjoin the inevitable infliction of death in the cause of justice and righteousness. The unborn, immortal and indestructible soul is incapable of being the killer of any other soul, which is like itself unborn, immortal and indestructible; and the idea that one soul kills another or causes another to be killed has therefore to be given up as being totally wrong.

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ २२ ॥

22. As a man, having cast off worn out clothes, takes others that are new, even so does the body-owning (soul) give up worn out bodies and get into others that are new.

In the way in which a man gives up old worn-out clothes and puts on new ones, in that same way is the soul, which is the owner of the body, conceived to give up old worn-out embodiments and take up new ones. This *ślōka*, therefore, deals with the passage of the soul from one embodiment to another. If it is possible for a soul to be always the same in an embodiment which is ever changing—it being at one time young, at another time of middle age, and lastly worn out and old—then it cannot but be possible for that soul, which is such an unchanging reality, to pass from one embodiment to another. Death itself is nothing more than a special kind of variation in relation to the nature of the soul's embodiment, the very existence of which is intended to bring about the fulfilment of the destiny of the soul. In other words, the idea here implied is that

the body is no more than the instrument by means of which the soul has to work out its own liberation from the bondage of *karma*. The object of the embodied human life, looked at from the standpoint of the doctrine of *karma*, is that each soul may thereby be enabled to work out its own destiny and ultimately realise its natural condition of absolute freedom from the bondage of matter. If the reforming power due to the discipline exercised in one prison-house of matter is found to be inadequate and becomes ineffective in securing liberation, then the soul which is striving to attain freedom has naturally to be subjected to a new course of discipline in a new prison, the nature of which is determined by the greater or lesser value of the partial fitness for freedom which that soul has already acquired. In this light, death appears to be only a natural and necessary precursor of a new life. Think how the death of the seed is inevitably involved in the birth of the new plant and its fresh life; then it will at once become clear to you how exceedingly natural it may be for all death to be, as it were, the gateway that leads to a new life. Even as the inner potentiality of the dying seed determines markedly the nature of the new plant and its new life, even so the imprinted experiences of a soul's dying embodiment are considered to have a determining effect upon the nature of its new embodiment and its new life. Pressing this analogy too far may, however, lead us to forget the great fact of the immateriality of the soul, which migrates from a dying embodiment to another that is to be newly brought into existence. Accordingly we are told—

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ २३ ॥

23. Weapons do not cleave this (soul); fire does not burn it; water does not wet it; and wind does not dry it up.

Cutting, burning, wetting and drying up are all operations, which are known to be possible only in relation to material bodies. Therefore that entity, which is uncuttable, unburnable, unwettable, and undryable, has necessarily to be an immaterial entity. We are told in the next stanza that it is imperishable, pervades all things

and is firm and immoveable and everlasting. Here there are ideas which require a fairly detailed explanation; and we shall therefore postpone their consideration to the next class.

vi

In our last class we were going on with the consideration of the question of the immortality of the soul as taught by Śrī-Kṛishṇa. The way in which the truth of the immortality of the soul is demonstrated in the *ślōkas* that we have already gone through is this:—First of all, stress is laid on the fact that the soul is different from the body, that is, on the fact that it is immaterial and thus incapable of being dealt with in the manner in which the body may be dealt with. Then it is pointed out that it is not subject to those changes and mutations which the body naturally undergoes in consequence of its materiality. Then again we are taught that, owing to this essential difference of the soul from the body and the consequent immateriality of the soul, it is characterised by immutability, which in itself means freedom from destruction and death. To-day also we have to go on with the consideration of these and other allied characteristics of the soul.

अच्छेद्योऽयमदाह्योऽयमक्लेद्योऽशोष्य एव च ।
नित्यस्सर्वगतस्स्थाणुरचलोऽयं सनातनः ॥ २४ ॥

24. It is uncuttable, unburnable, unwettable, and indeed undryable; it is eternal, all-pervading, firm, immoveable and everlasting.

Please observe that the qualities opposed to what are negatively mentioned in the first part of this *ślōka*, namely, the qualities of being cuttable, of being burnable, of being wettable, and of being dryable, are all such as are found in association only with material bodies. The statement that the soul is uncuttable, unburnable, unwettable and undryable, therefore, means that the soul is essentially distinct from matter. Here we have therefore certain negative qualifications by means of which the soul may be distinguished from matter. Are there any such distinguishing positive qualifications also in relation to the soul? Yes, there are; and some of

them are mentioned in the latter half of this very *ślōka*. The soul is *nitya* or eternal. Is matter eternal? It is eternal in one sense, that is, in the sense in which modern science knows it to be indestructible. If you take the final essence of matter into consideration, that is, if you neglect all the peculiarities which are impressed upon it owing to certain variations in its proximate as well as ultimate configurations and conditions, and take into consideration only that thing, which forms the common substratum of all material bodies, that substratum also is declared by modern science to be indestructible. Please note that modern science does not say that matter is immutable; it only says that it cannot be annihilated or converted into nothing. When by destruction we understand annihilation, then both matter and soul are indestructible. When, however, destruction means only mutation, that is, a complete change in condition and configuration, then in this sense the soul alone is indestructible or immortal. Matter, on the other hand, is mutable and therefore mortal. It has, nevertheless to be noted that what is here meant by the term *nitya*, as applied to the soul, is its freedom from annihilation, that is, from that kind of destruction which results in the production of nothingness.

The soul is also described here as *sarvagata*, that is, as that which has pervaded all things in the universe so as to be found in every one of them. The question as to whether the soul, which thus pervades the whole universe, is one or many, naturally crops up here for consideration. According to the *advaita* or the monistic school of the Vēdānta philosophy, the principle of consciousness which, as soul, is in association with individual beings of various kinds in the universe, is not different essentially from the Universal Soul. In other words, that school maintains that the all-pervading principle of consciousness, which is the Supreme Universal Soul, is in essence the same as the various individual souls. The commonly experienced individuality of the individual soul is due to the fact of its not having directly realised its own oneness with the Supreme Universal Soul, which oneness it is conceived to be possible for every embodied human being to realise in the state of *samādhi* attainable through the practice of *yōga*. The distinction between the individual soul and the Universal Soul is explained by the

followers of this monistic school by comparing it to the distinction between *ghaṭākāśa* and *mahākāśa*, that is, between the spatial expanse which is limited by the earthy walls of a pot and the great outer expanse of space which is wholly unlimited. If the pot is broken into bits, then at once this differentiation disappears. Similarly the all-filling and unlimited Universal Principle of Consciousness is, in essence, the same as the limited individual soul; and the difference between the individual soul and the Universal Soul is due to the fact of the Universal Soul becoming subject to certain *upādhis* or limitations. Since the unconditioned Universal Soul is thus conceived to become the individual soul under the influence of limiting conditions, it must happen that, as soon as this limitation is destroyed, the individual soul becomes one with the Universal Soul. Now, according to that position, the explanation of the latter half of this *ślōka* is easy; and particularly the meanings of the two expressions *sarvagata* and *sthāṇu* become clear at once. If the soul is *sarvagata* or all-pervading, then it must necessarily be *sthāṇu* and *achala*, that is, firm and immoveable. The term *sthāṇu* means that which is firmly fixed, and the term *achala* means that which does not move. These two terms express the same idea; the former looks at it from the positive side and the latter from the negative side. It must be easy to see how such a principle of consciousness as is all-pervading must necessarily be firm and immoveable. If motion means passing from one place to another, and if the thing we are thinking about is all-pervading and exists everywhere, then, so long as this thing cannot find a place where it already is not, it is surely impossible for it to move from one place to another. Hence, whatever is all-pervading must inevitably be firm and immoveable. In this manner, we find no difficulty in understanding this *ślōka* in accordance with the accepted conclusions of *Advaita-vēdānta.*

But how do the other schools of Vēdāntic religion and philosophy interpret this *ślōka*? The term *sthāṇu* in this *ślōka* is very generally interpreted by those *Vēdāntins*, who are not monistic, as implying that the soul has been throughout free from all change The word itself is derived from the root *sthā* meaning "to stay"; and *sthāṇu* ordinarily means a pillar. The peculiarity of a pillar may well be conceived to consist in that it has always been a pillar, for it is

this firm unchangeable character of the pillar that has made it serve as a strong and enduring support. If the term *sthāṇu* imports in this manner freedom from change in relation to past time, the term *achala* may be interpreted as indicating the soul's incapability of undergoing any change in the future. In other words, it is the soul's unchangeableness in the past that is here denoted by its firmness; and its unchangeability in the future is denoted by its immoveability. Looked at in this way these two epithets become complementary to each other, and are explanatory of the meaning of the word *sanātana* as distinguished from *nitya*. The unchanged and unchangeable soul has to be *sanātana* or everlastingly the same in nature, and thus be immutably indestructible and immortal. This epithet *sanātana*, which here imports that the soul has always been and shall always be the same in nature, is thus seen to be intelligble from all standpoints. These characteristics do not and cannot of course belong to the material embodiment of the soul.

अव्यक्तोऽयमचिन्त्योऽयमविकार्योऽयमुच्यते ।
तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं नानुशोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २५ ॥

25. This (soul) is said to be non-manifest, unthinkable and unchangeable. Therefore, after understanding it to be such, it is not proper for you (thus) to feel sorry in relation to it.

Here are certain other characteristics of the soul, which enable us to distinguish it well from matter. Now the soul is spoken of as that which is not manifest like matter, and as that which is unthinkable and immodifiable. These attributes form, as it were, a summary of the chief characteristics of the soul; and they do not at all belong to matter. Since we constantly perceive it, matter cannot be said to be *avyakta*; indeed, it is the one thing which is prominently *vyakta* or manifest. Matter cannot be said to be absolutely *achintya*, that is, to be unknowable or unthinkable. It is true that, if we try to get an idea of the ultimate nature of matter and its relation to consciousness, we approach an impenetrable veil which for the time shuts off our mental vision. But even then it cannot be said that matter is unthinkable in the way in which the soul is; for much of what constitutes the content of our consciousness, to use the language of

psychologists, is the result of our perception of matter and material things. If matter were unthinkable and unknowable as the soul is, then our mind would be very nearly a blank, having been emptied of all its external experience, which goes to make up so largely the substance, so to say, of its inner life. If we thus understand that matter is *vyakta* and *chintya*, the characterisation of the soul as *avyakta* and *achintya* may at once be seen to be clearly intended to affirm its immateriality. The term *avyakta*, as applied to the soul, indicates thus that it is incapable of being modified so as to pass from condition to condition. It may be, however, said here that matter also deserves to be called *avyakta*, because it is not capable of being modified into anything other than matter. Nevertheless, it is strictly true that the soul is very much more really immutable than matter, inasmuch as, in the case of matter, its configurations at least are seen to be capable of undergoing change. And it is this change in configuration which is generally spoken of as the *vikāra* or modification of matter. Even such a change in configuration cannot be conceived to be possible in relation to the soul. Our very common experience that we are to-day what we were yesterday in so far as our own personality and inner individuality is concerned, is obviously understood to be the result of this fact that the soul is altogether unchangeable. The soul's experiences in relation to the external world of matter may vary from time to time as well as from place to place; still its inner essence and individuality remain for ever and in all ways unchanged. There is one more point to which we must pay some attention here. If we maintain that the soul, as it is in itself, is utterly unthinkable and unknowable, much of what follows in the *Gītā* will have to be considered to be wholly out of place. It is declared in the *Gītā* later on that it is possible for certain persons—if they undergo a special kind of psychological discipline so as successfully to perform a special psychological experiment—to realise their own soul and its immutable reality. But the statement in this *ślōka* is not made from the standpoint of those experts, who have undergone the required discipline and have successfully performed this particular psychological experiment of soul-introspection. The characterisation of the soul, as it is given here, is from the common standpoint of the ordinary man. When indeed death cannot accordingly mean the destruction of the

reality or of the appointed destiny of the soul of him who dies, there is no reason why it should give rise to any sorrow at all. This, of course, does not mean that the killer is always justified in killing, because he thereby does not destroy the destiny of any soul. The innocent killer's justification is ever in the motive which prompts him to kill, as we shall very soon see. In judging the work of destruction done by soldiers through their fighting in wars, the import of death has to be well understood beforehand both from the standpoint of him who inflicts death and also from that of him on whom it is inflicted. Otherwise the judgment is certain to prove wrong and one-sided. With the next *ślōka* begins another turn in the argument, which Śrī Kṛishṇa used with the object of convincing Arjuna that his sorrow and unwillingness to fight in the war and do his duty as a soldier were entirely wrong and unreasonable.

अथ चैनं नित्यजातं नित्यं वा मन्यसे मृतम् ।
तथापि त्वं महाबाहो नैनं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २६ ॥
जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्युर्ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च ।
तस्मादपरिहार्येऽर्थे न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ २७ ॥

26. And if, O mighty-armed (Arjuna), you think that this (soul) is, on the other hand, constantly born and constantly dies, even then it is not proper for you to feel sorry for such (a soul).

27. For, death is certain (to occur) in relation to whatever is born, and birth also is certain (to occur) in relation to whatever has died. Accordingly it is not proper for you to feel sorry on account of a thing which it is impossible to prevent.

These *ślōkas* are intended to show to Arjuna that, even if he adopted the opposite position and maintained the soul to be transient, unreal and unenduring in character, the infliction of death in battle on one's enemies could not be properly a source of grief to any one who had thus to inflict death. If the soul is ever and anon born and ever and anon dies, then, since the soul that is born has

inevitably to die and the soul that dies has inevitably to be born, neither birth nor death can be avoided by any one. Therefore it is not wise even on the part of the man, who holds this view regarding the nature of the soul, to feel sorry in relation to his having in duty to inflict death on a being to whom birth after death and death after birth are both unavoidable. When birth and death necessarily follow each other, and when neither of them is capable of being absolutely prevented from occurring, then how can there be any wisdom in feeling sorry for the death of those, who have anyhow to die? It may again be argued that the soul is not immortal, immaterial and immutable, but is something which is known to have a short course of life here, and the whence and the whither whereof are both wrapped up in an undiscoverable mystery. It is this position which is next taken up for consideration.

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ २८ ॥

28. O Arjuna, the beings (in this world) are characterised by an unknown beginning; (they) have a known middle, and surely an unknown end. What is the (meaning of) weeping in sorrow in relation to them?

We do not know the beginnings of the beings in this universe; only their middle or current course is known to us; and what their end is, that also we do not know. Our little life is, as Shakespeare puts it, "rounded with a sleep"; and we are therefore incapable of finding out what we were before we came into existence here, and also what will become of us after we depart from here. Then why should there be any grief and mourning at all in relation to death and destruction of life? Judging from the standpoint of him who is killed in war, death may mean no loss of the underlying reality of his being, or it may prove a mere natural incident in an inevitable and unbroken succession of births and deaths, or else it may be something the true meaning of which we cannot clearly understand. Thus, whether we adopt the view that the soul is immortal, or maintain that it is ever born and ever dies, or hold in relation to it the indefinite position of the agnostic, in any case it cannot be established that death causes

any harm to the ultimate destiny of him who is killed. When no such harm is demonstrable, there can be no true justification for any grief or sorrow in relation to the infliction and occurrence of death. The truth about the soul is, indeed, capable of being stated in general terms in the following manner :—

आश्चर्यवत् पश्यति कश्चिदेनमाश्चर्यवद्वदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेद न चैव कश्चित् ॥ २९ ॥

29. One (person) looks upon this (soul) as a marvel, and in the very same manner another (person) speaks of it as a marvel; and again another hears of it as a marvel; and there is none at all that, even after having heard of it, has come to know it.

The word *āścharya* in this *ślōka* means wonder or marvel. Unless there is something strange and uncommon acting as the cause, wonder cannot be easily roused in any of us. To see a thing to be strange is to know that it is of a more or less markedly peculiar and uncommon character. In so far as the soul is concerned, Śrī-Kṛishṇa says in this *ślōka* that some person—it may be one in a thousand persons—succeeds in seeing it, and that, when he so sees it, he is apt to find it to be something strangely wonderful. In other words, when any person realises, as a part of his own personal experience, the essential nature of his own soul, then that realisation of his will be found not to be comparable with any of his other experiences acquired normally in the ordinary conditions of his life. This realisation of the soul is therefore a kind of superconscious or transcendental experience; and the soul that may thus be realised is often talked of and described even by such persons as have not themselves had any experience of self-realisation. Some one, some great seer, who has realised his own soul, may explain his experience to others who have not had such a realisation; and it is but natural that his explanation should appear strange to them. These others, who have so learnt from the seer what they are incapable of realising for themselves, may often undertake to teach the nature of the soul, as learnt by them, to some others; and in so doing they may endeavour to explain what the seer had learnt from

his own experience, namely, that the soul is something marvellously strange and wonderful. Those who listen to such a teaching may in their turn consider the whole thing to be strange and wonderful. Thus the ultimate result is that really nobody knows fully and accurately the true nature of the soul. What is the meaning of this chain of strangeness and wonder? It surely cannot be made to convey the idea that we can know nothing of the soul at all. To know the soul even as a marvel—that is, as the *yōgin* knows it—is indeed to blow up the position of the agnostic.

The statement made in the previous stanza, that it is impossible for us to know either the beginning or the end of beings in the universe, is not in relation to the beginning or the end of the material embodiments of beings, but has a special transcendental meaning, inasmuch as it refers to what the condition of the soul was before it became embodied, as well as to what its condition would be after it got out of the embodiment. That things which are transcendental or superconscious are altogether incapable of being realised by any one in any circumstance is a proposition which only a very bold man will assert. Nobody can, in respect of men's superconscious psychological experiences, claim to stand as a representative in the place of another. For instance, because one is not a man of genius, one cannot say that genius is altogether impossible in nature. Let us understand that there is difference between man and man in connection with what may be spoken of as the natural endowment of mental power: then we shall be in a position to see how it is that we ought not to declare from our own limited experience that things, which are not ordinarily possible to us, are not also possible to others of better and higher endowment and capacity. The position that, because self-realization is not possible to most of us, it can be possible to none at all, is what we certainly have no title of any kind to believe in and to uphold. If we grant that there are at least a few specially endowed persons who have this power of self-realization, and believe, moreover, in the recorded statements found in more than one religious literature in the world that self-realisation was actually achieved by many great seers known severally to the history of various great religions in the world, then the declaration that some may see the self as something

strange and marvellous becomes interestingly intelligible and quite full of meaning. You will thus see that this marvellousness relates truly to the realisation of the soul, but not to its unknowability. If we want to know the real nature of the soul, we have to practice *yōga*, so as to get into that luminous and informing trance which is known as *samādhi*; and then we too shall realise how the soul is something strange and marvellously wonderful.

The teaching, which most men give regarding the soul by means of their own human language, is not always based upon such personal transcendental experience. Indeed it cannot be so based. If we take human languages and analyse their psychological contents so as thereby to measure accurately their capacity to express human experience, we shall find that not one among the languages of mankind is really capable of giving us anything like a definite notion of an experience which, being transcendental and superconscious, is necessarily strange and supra-normal. To express such supra-normal experiences we certainly have no words in any language. Language grows everywhere out of the normal and ordinary experiences of human beings to satisfy their common and ordinary needs of mental expression. Since these common experiences of mankind are so very different from such transcendental experience, and since also the common needs of humanity in the matter of language do not require expressions to describe supra-normal and transcendental experiences, and since again the very nature of language makes it impossible for it to be the medium for the expression of such psychologically strange and uncommon experiences, we find that no language is capable of adequately expressing whatever happens to be the object of the *yōgin's* personal experience in his transcendental psychological condition of *samādhi*. All verbal descriptions of the soul are, therefore, apt to be not only strange but also inadequate. If, in addition to this intrinsic inadequacy of language itself, we take into consideration the inadequacy of the teacher to explain well what he has in his mind, as also the inadequacy of those that listen to him to understand his teaching in the sense in which he gives them, we at once see how the statement that no one really knows the nature of the soul, even after hearing it described, is remarkably true and incontestable.

देही नित्यमवध्योऽयं देहे सर्वस्य भारत ।
तस्मात् सर्वाणि भूतानि न त्वं शोचितुमर्हसि ॥ ३० ॥

30. In the body of all (beings) is this embodied (soul) ever indestructible. Therefore, in relation to all (such) beings, it is not proper for you to mourn in grief.

The soul is eternal and indestructible, and is to be found within the body of all beings. Therefore, when any being dies, it suffers no loss of its own reality, and its destiny is in no way marred thereby. Let us now try to understand some of those alternative views in regard to the nature of the soul, which were stated and examined by Śrī Krishṇa with a view to enable Arjuna to see that his having in duty to inflict death on others in battle is no sufficient reason for him to feel sad and despondent in a critical situation in which he was bound to do his duty as a soldier. When, as now shown, death imports no loss of essential reality, and implies nothing like the destruction or even the marring of one's appointed final destiny, then surely there can be no reason to feel sorry for having to inflict death, as a duty, on those who, through wanton disregard of justice and righteousness, make themselves liable to be punished with death. It must be, I feel quite sure, evident to you all that the justification for him, who inflicts death in war, is that he does so under the obligation of duty; and accordingly Arjuna was further told as follows.

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धियुद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत् क्षत्त्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Considering also (the nature of) your own duty (in life), it is not proper for you to shake and falter. Indeed there is no other good (thing) for a Kshattriya than a just war.

In so far as the Kshattriya is concerned, nothing worthier can surely happen to him than to have to fight in a war, which rests on justice and is for the vindication of justice. To be called upon to fight in such a war is indeed the grandest opportunity that any true

soldier can ever hope to have in his life. Why do we say so? Is it a mere matter of sentiment? Can the soldier's love of glory and distinction be a rational and adequate justification for his deed of destruction in war? The soldier's sentiment in regard to the value of war, as the one event which gives him the opportunity to win honour and distinction, is in itself neither unworthy nor unsubstantial. However, it goes without saying that the capable soldier may easily command opportunities to win honour and distinction even in an unjust war, so much so that we are often apt on this account to charge military men in authority that they very often needlessly precipitate war. Although it cannot be denied that many soldiers are only too frequently actuated by this sort of greed of glory, still, according to Śrī-Kṛishṇa, fighting and killing in war is good for the Kshattriya, only when the war is just, but not otherwise. Therefore what Śrī-Kṛishṇa means here is that the *dharmyatva* or the righteousness of a war must be made sure of, before pronouncing that a Kshattriya can have nothing nobler or worthier to do as duty than to have to fight in that war. I believe I have already drawn your attention to how it is no part of the duty or the discipline of a soldier, who has voluntarily taken service in an army, to make sure beforehand that the cause on behalf of which he is from time to time called upon to fight is a thoroughly just one. However, in a war resting on absolute justice, the opportunity that a good soldier has for achieving the true end of life, through the unselfish performance of his duty therein, is much nobler than the opportunity of another soldier fighting quite dutifully elsewhere on behalf of a cause not so well based on justice. Whether it be in a just or an unjust war, fighting is the inevitable duty of the enlisted soldier; still, when the war is just, his fighting becomes undoubtedly the more commendable thereby. It is on this point that stress is laid here. In undertaking to fight in battles, every soldier has to be ready to die at any moment; and whenever he goes to the front, he has to be prepared never to return. This enforced readiness of the soldier to sacrifice his own life is a point to which we have to pay some attention here. When a war is really undertaken on behalf of justice, this readiness of the soldier to sacrifice his life in the war is calculated to make that justice triumph ultimately. Although injustice also is often made to flourish

through the soldier's readiness to sacrifice his life in war, still there can be nothing nobler for him than to have the opportunity to show practically that he values *dharma*, that is, duty and justice and righteousness, more than he values his own life. Which student of history or of philosophy can deny that there is nothing nobler and worthier for man here to achieve than to help on the triumph of justice and establish the sovereignty of righteousness? When the war, in which it is the duty of the soldier to kill his enemies, is distinctly made out to rest on justice and righteousness, and when the justice-loving soldier, fighting therein with an ever willing and ever present readiness to sacrifice his own life, if need be, to help on the triumph of justice, kills the lovers of injustice and unrighteousness, how can it be that he at all does wrong?

यदृच्छया चोपपन्नं स्वर्गद्वारमपावृतम् ।
सुखिनः क्षत्रियाः पार्थ लभन्ते युद्धमीदृशम् ॥ ३२ ॥

32. O Arjuna, it is (only) happy Kshattriyas that come by a war such as this, which has spontaneously arisen of itself and is (like) an opened out doorway leading (one) into (the divine world of) *Svarga*.

To have to fight in this kind of war, wherein all true soldiers and princely warriors have ample opportunities to sacrifice freely their own lives, if need be, so that in the end justice may thereby become better established, falls to the lot of only a few highly fortunate and happy Kshattriyas. Moreover, as Śrī-Kṛishṇa Himself pointed out to Arjuna here, this war was neither caused nor sought by the Pāṇḍavas themselves; it was actually forced on them as the *Mahābhārata* makes it abundantly clear. It is evident also that the Pāṇḍavas were fighting for a just cause. Śrī-Kṛishṇa obviously held this view, and there can be no doubt that Arjuna also must have felt that the cause of the Pāṇḍavas was just, and that the war was wantonly and very unrighteously forced on them. Nevertheless, it is often hard to say, in relation to a war, which side is just and which unjust, until the war itself ultimately decides the question practically. Although history has so utilised human wars as to make them subserve in the long run the ends of lasting justice

and humane civilisation, men are not exempt from the duty of having to bring their own ethical thoughts and considerations to bear on the determination of the justice or otherwise of the cause which has to be upheld by the result of a war. If we use such ethical considerations, without waiting for the result of the war itself to decide the justice or otherwise of the cause thereof, it must be possible for most of us to arrive at a more or less definite conclusion in regard to which side it is that is really just in the war, and which it is that is not so just. It is such a justification from the standpoint of morality and law that is meant to be postulated here by the statement that this war is *dharmya*. To a noble Kshattriya warrior like Arjuna, who knew that the cause, on behalf of which he had to fight, was just and that his enemies were unjust *ātatāyins*, it should surely have been an exceedingly happy duty in life to be called upon to fight like a true soldier and hero and to freely sacrifice his own life for the establishment of justice and the undoing of evil and injustice. The soldier who declines to serve the high moral purposes of history and civilisation, by throwing away even such opportunities as are afforded by a just war, which has arisen of itself for the vindication of morality and righteousness, is undeniably like one that foolishly declines to go into heaven, even when the door is kept widely open for him to enter.

vii

In the last lecture, we were dealing with the question of how it was the duty of Arjuna as a Kshattriya to fight in a war which had to serve the great moral purpose of vindicating justice. We tried to see then how the opportunity to fight in a just war is indeed the greatest good that may ever befall a Kshattriya in life. The reason, why this is so, is that, in undertaking to fight in a war resting on righteousness and aiming at the vindication of justice, the true Kshattriya shows his readiness to sacrifice his own life for the advancement of righteousness and the establishment of justice. This very readiness on the part of the soldier to sacrifice his own life in this manner for the great moral ends of civilisation clearly indicates that his life is highly fit to be used for such a purpose, so as to make it serve the cause of the establishment of truth and the enforcement of justice. It is abundantly demonstrated in

history that he who lives chiefly, if not wholly, for himself does not really live at all; for his life, through its very selfishness, becomes almost totally devoid of those noble opportunities, which would make it notably worthy and widely serviceable. Hence it is rightly pointed out in the context here that the opportunity to fight in a just war does not readily come to all Kshattriyas. We have already seen that we have not as yet got into that state of civilisation and moral progress wherein we may do away with wars altogether. Hence we cannot also do away with the difficulty of having to weigh the justice of wars by simply declaring that they are all unrighteous and inhuman. War in itself may be good or bad; that is not the point which is taken into consideration here. Assuming that wars are necessary, we have to distinguish the wars that are just from those that are not just. Although the ultimate arbitrament of arms is still necessary in deciding certain great international issues of civilisation, still the assured finality of morality and law, in the valuation and apportionment of righteousness and justice in relation to those issues, can never be ignored by any human community, which aims at progress and the true betterment of man's moral and material well-being. It is, accordingly, only lucky and fortunate soldiers that obtain such highly valuable opportunities of fighting in wars which are really just and free from all blame.

अथ चेत्त्वमिमं धर्म्यं सङ्ग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिञ्च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३३ ॥

33. If, then, you will not engage in this lawful war, you will thereby abandon your own (natural) duty and honoured reputation, and will thereafter acquire sin also.

In this *ślōka* Śrī-Kṛishṇa points out how it is that men happen to commit sin. You remember how Arjuna, in his despondent mood of pity and sorrow, declared that, if he killed his own kindred, even though they were *ātatāyins*, he would himself be committing sin. Śrī-Kṛishṇa tells us that it is never the act itself which is either sinful or otherwise. Consequently the idea of Arjuna that killing in itself

causes sin is wrong. Even the act of killing, under certain circumstances, may not give rise to sin at all, while under other circumstances it may very well give rise to sin. The only way in which a man commits sin is by violating his duty, that is, either by wantonly not doing his duty or by wantonly doing what is not his duty. If killing becomes the duty of a man, and he kills accordingly, he does not thereby commit any sin; but if, when killing has not become his duty, he nevertheless kills, then he surely sins. Thus it is in the violation of duty that we have to find the real source and cause of sin. Whatever may happen to be a man's position in life, he has certain well recognised duties associated therewith. It goes without saying that all people cannot occupy the same position in life; nor can all people have to do the same kind of work in life. For the progress of society, why, for the very maintenance of its life, it is necessary that all its varied and manifold functions must be performed by all sorts and conditions of men, possessing various kinds of aptitudes and qualifications. If it so happens that a certain man, in the performance of his duty, has to do a kind of work, which in itself may not be under all circumstances very desirable, then to hold that such a man in doing his duty commits any sin in any manner is altogether wrong and untenable. One of the most famous episodes in the *Mahābhārata* distinctly gives expression to this view of duty; and that episode is that of Dharmavyādha or the *Dutiful Hunter*, who lived the life of a butcher and was still held in honour as a great seer and wise preceptor. So great was he, that, from him, many are said to have learnt wisdom for the guidance of their lives aright. To many of us the life of the butcher will naturally seem to be full of cruelty and harshness and sin. But if the butcher does his work of butchery under the belief that he is thereby doing his duty, and that it is his appointed function in life to do that work, then surely he does not commit any sin. This is exactly what that story is intended to demonstrate to us. No action is or ever can be in itself sinful, so long as it is done as duty. We may now take note of the relation that is, in this *ślōka*, understood to exist between *dharma* and *kīrti*. It is the performance of a man's own duties in life, in the very manner in which they ought to be performed, that really gives him his good name and reputation for honour. In other words, the good name of a man is dependent

ultimately upon the goodness of his life, which consists so largely in his doing all his duties in life in the manner in which they ought to be done. To lose such a good name, therefore, inevitably means the giving up or the misdoing of our duties in life. Otherwise, the loss of one's reputation for honour and worthiness is almost impossible. It may, however, strike some of you that sometimes unworthy men manage to acquire a good reputation. It does indeed so happen sometimes. But it is not this kind of undeserved good name, this false reputation, which is possessed by an unworthy man, that is really denoted by the word *kīrti*. By this word we understand that reputation, which a man secures in due accordance with what he merits, his merit itself being determined by the way in which he has been performing his duties in life.

अकीर्तिञ्चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् ।
संभावितस्य चाकीर्तिर्मरणादतिरिच्यते ॥ ३४ ॥

34. Moreover, (all) beings will attribute unto you eternal disgrace; and, in the case of a man of honour, disgrace (as an evil) transcends (even) death.

I have tried to point out to you what I consider to be the true relation between one's good name and one's proper performance of duty in life. Therefore, in the light of this rational relation, there can be nothing strange in the idea that, in losing our well-merited good name, we must be in some manner or other courting sin, although it is true enough that worthy men are often unrighteously censured quite as much as unworthy men are undeservedly honoured and praised. Accordingly, the eternal disgrace of an evil reputation for unrighteousness is what all men of honour are expected to dread much more intensely than they may ever dread death. We ought not to miss to note here that Śrī-Kṛishṇa does not mean to teach that death is a thing which is after all really to be dreaded; in fact He urges that, while there is surely nothing to be afraid of in relation to death, the infamy of disgrace and dishonour is so much worse than death that it is not at all easy not to be afraid of it. In the case of the large majority of men, their death happens generally to be the last thing we hear about them; after that event very little is indeed thought of

about them. It has also to be remembered that, very often, when life itself is unpleasant and full of difficulties and hard trials, weak men manage to get out of such an annoying situation by courting death, which, they hope, would act as a relief to them. And there is further the case in which death is courted by the strong and worthy man of honour in preference to disgrace and dishonour. In these cases death does not wash off surely either the discredit of the failure or the dishonour of the disgrace; still it is possible to hold that, in the oblivion of death, the pangs of failure and dishonour may not remain to be keenly felt. Whatever may be the true nature of what is commonly spoken of as the oblivion of death, it is evident, from what we have been already told, that the unrighteous undutifulness, which gives rise to failure, disgrace and dishonour, does not become ineffective or inoperative as a matter of course after death. To dread disgrace and dishonour more than death is not, therefore, mere sentiment and honourable chivalry; for, as we have seen, this greater dread of dishonour is very well founded on reason and on the well-ascertained truth, that deserved dishonour can indeed deprive even death of its power of consolation.

भयाद्रणादुपरतं मंस्यन्ते त्वां महारथाः ।
येषाञ्च त्वं बहुमतो भूत्वा यास्यसि लाघवम् ॥ ३५ ॥

35. The warriors of the great chariot will think of you as having kept back from the battle through fear; and having been highly thought of by them (till now), you will (hereafter) meet with disregard (in their estimation).

Once a man begins to lose his reputation, there is no knowing when those who judge him will do so rightly, that is, give him only just as much of discredit as he really deserves. Ordinarily what happens in life is that, when we begin to think ill of a man, we think very ill of him, and when we begin to think well of a man, we similarly think very well of him. There is thus a natural tendency in most of us to exaggerate the merits as well as the demerits of others. When the critics, who are in this manner prone to exaggerate the merits as well as the demerits of those whom

they judge and criticise, are given to understand that a warrior, whose duty it was to fight in a just war, kept back from it somehow, they will then attribute to the desisting warrior much worse motives than those which must really have actuated him. As a result those, who were in the habit of thinking highly of him, will thereafter begin to think very lightly of him. Although Śrī-Kṛishṇa knew that it was not out of fear and cowardice that Arjuna at that time declined to fight in the war, still the heroes assembled in the battle-field would naturally attribute his disinclination to fear and to cowardice. To a chivalrous man of honour it must always be very painful to fall in the estimation of his equals. Most of you must be familiar with the well known Brahminical benediction—समानानामुत्तमश्लोको भवतु, according to which, it is conceived to be one of the best of blessings to bestow on a man, to wish that he may have the highest reputation among his equals. They say that it requires a poet to appreciate poetry well and accurately. Similarly it indeed requires a true hero to appreciate heroism truly. Therefore it cannot but be highly painful for any heroic warrior to lose his reputation for prowess and heroism among his own equals.

अवाच्यवादांश्च बहून् वदिष्यन्ति तवाहिताः ।
निन्दन्तस्तव सामर्थ्यं ततो दुःखतरं नु किम् ॥ ३६ ॥

36. Your enemies, decrying your prowess, will, moreover, give out many unspeakable scandals (about you). Indeed, what is there more painful than this?

If it is painful to fall in the estimation of our equals, it must be much more so to become the subject of scandalous talk among our enemies. An unworldly ascetic, when treated in that manner by those who hate him for some reason or other, may let them do and say as they like, feeling all the while that, in spite of them and all their scandals, he is ever bound to be what he is in reality. But, in the case of a chivalrous Kshattriya and warrior of reputation, to be declared by his enemies to be a soldier, who has no capacity and no prowess, must certainly be most galling and painful to put up with. The pain caused by having to kill the enemies in battle is almost nothing, when compared with the pain due to the disgrace caused

by the spread of such scandals. We may now observe that, after drawing the attention of Arjuna to the immortality of the soul and the unreasonableness of his pity and sorrow, Śrī-Kṛishṇa very rightly pointed out to him that the opportunity to fight in a just war is indeed the grandest that may ever befall a Kshattriya. Such an opportunity comes to him but rarely; and when it does come, the Kshattriya, who misses it, neglects his duty, and thereby not only incurs loss of reputation but also becomes assuredly tainted with sin. In this loss of reputation, there is something which is certain to be so painful to a chivalrous Kshattriya as to induce him rather to die than to suffer in name and fame in that manner. His equals, who really know his prowess and his capacity best, will, nevertheless, be apt to declare that he kept back from the work of war through fear and cowardice; and what is worse still, even his inferiors—his very enemies—will say that, as a soldier, he has neither courage nor capacity. It is therefore but natural that Śrī-Kṛishṇa called upon Arjuna to compare carefully the effect of his doing his duty in battle with that of his proposed renunciation and ascetic retirement and surrender of duty.

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धाय कृतनिश्चयः ॥ ३७ ॥

37. In case you are slain (in battle), you will go to *Svarga*; or, if you prove victorious, you will enjoy (the sovereignty of) the earth. Therefore, arise, O Arjuna, with the settled determination to fight (in the war).

There is a direct appeal made to the self-loving instinct of Arjuna in this *ślōka*. The reference to the possible loss of Arjuna's reputation among his equals, who might think that he fled away from the battle-field through fear and cowardice, and to the unspeakable scandals, which his enemies might spread about him, is indeed much like an appeal to his self-love. And here in this *ślōka* the appeal to self-love is even more direct. Please observe how Śrī-Kṛishṇa has come down from the highest and the most unselfish metaphysical moral position of the immortality of the soul to the lowest and the most selfish argument that may be urged to induce

a man like Arjuna to do his duty. The meaning of such a marked descent from the high platform of the immortality of the soul to this appeal to self-love is to be found in the great anxiety of Śrī-Kṛishṇa to see that Arjuna anyhow did his duty, and thus became free from the taint of undutifulness and sin. The exhaustion of selfishness through selfishness is certainly not unknown to the methods of moral discipline maintained in human societies. Some even hold that selfishness alone can counteract selfishness. Nevertheless, selfishness, as a motive for the doing of duty, is not certainly so good as the conviction, arising out of the realisation of the immortality and essential freedom of the soul, that these alone constitute the foundation on which the obligatoriness of duty most securely rests. If you are convinced of the immortality of the soul and of its essential freedom, and if you base your reasoning regarding duty on that conviction, then it logically becomes a matter of absolute necessity for you to do your duty in life irrespective of all consequences to yourself. Indeed, the whole course of the ethical conduct of man in life may be made to rest ultimately on this great truth of the freedom and the immortality of the soul. Nevertheless, philosophical considerations of this kind are often so very much withdrawn from actual life, that many people do not attach much importance to them. So far as the practical living of life and the performance of its duties are concerned, what a man has unavoidably to take into consideration is mainly the relation between his own interests and the interests of the other people with whom his life is in any manner connected. And so long as there is no open clashing between his own interests and the interests of these other people, he may well feel assured ordinarily that his own conduct is just and wise and good. Every man is equally free to make the best use of his own endowments and opportunities; and this in itself clearly indicates to us that the sphere of one man's activities should in no way unfavourably overlap the sphere of another man's activities. In this way the selfishness of one man does indeed tend to check the harmfulness arising out of the selfishness of another man. Moreover, in the case of the same man, it is possible for the larger and the more comprehensive self-interest to supersede the smaller and the more immediate selfishness. Conduct, therefore, may easily be judged either from the standpoint of interest and convenience, or from the

standpoint of the metaphysical foundations of morality. The manner in which men judge it, is generally dependent upon their own predilections as determined by their culture and their natural temperament. To the truly philosophical mind it will naturally appear that to judge conduct from any standpoint other than that of its metaphysical foundations is both unsound and improper. If, on the other hand, the standpoint of interest and convenience is adopted in judging conduct, then also it becomes possible for a man to know how to live a convenient life, which is, as far as possible, free from strife and from all avoidable endurance and infliction of suffering. But such a life will be always devoid of inspiration and of the light of the larger love, for the mere reason that the whole structure of it is based on nothing higher or nobler than mere self-love.

Śrī-Kṛishṇa placed before Arjuna both these ways of looking at the philosophy of conduct. He first told him how he may look at conduct and judge its worthiness or otherwise from the standpoint of high metaphysical ethics. And then He drew his attention to the other standpoint of convenience and interest, from which also conduct may well be examined and judged to be good or bad. Quite immediately, however, He pointed out to Arjuna that this latter standpoint is not always a safe one to adopt. It is too empirical to be properly correlated to the underlying reality of life and its true purpose. In one of the previous *ślōkas*, Śrī-Kṛishṇa told Arjuna that he would be committing sin if he did not do his duty, and then drew his attention to certain motives of self-love which at least ought to have induced him to do his duty well. Here we have to remember that it had been clearly declared to him beforehand that duty is done best only when it is done in its own interest; and he had accordingly been given to understand that he would be committing sin, even if he did well all his duties, when their doing was due to motives of self-love. The motive in the mind, with which a man does his duty, is a powerful factor in determining whether he has committed or avoided sin in the doing of it. A man cannot rightly maintain that, simply because he has performed his duties in life well, as judged from outside, he is inevitably free from all sin. To be free from all sin, two things are necessary, namely, the externally proper performance of one's duties in life

and also the total absence of internal motives of self-love in relation to such a performance thereof. Therefore, where self-love prompts one to live the life of duty, one ought to endeavour to rise above its influence to make sure that that life of his is indeed worthily lived. Self-love may be permitted to prompt, but should not be allowed to dominate, the performance of duty in the life of any man who is earnestly in search of the salvation of self-liberation and God-attainment.

सुखदु:खे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।

ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Therefore, treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, and victory and defeat, get ready for the fight. Thus, you will not acquire sin.

In this connection, one point, which has always struck me as specially interesting, is to see how, after having descended from the high platform of the immortality of the soul to an appeal to Arjuna's self-love, Śrī-Kṛishṇa again endeavoured to lift him up to the lofty level of absolutely unselfish ethics, and declared to him that, if he did not do his duty in life with motives that were free from all selfishness, he would be certainly committing sin. In the case of all men, whose lives have a more or less marked bearing on public welfare, there are two things which we have to take into consideration in judging their conduct in life; and those two things are, firstly, to know whether they have actually performed their duties well, and, secondly, to know with what motives they have performed them. As long as they do well the actual work which is expected of them as duty, no harm can arise from their conduct to public welfare, whatever may be the motive actuating them to do their duty well. But so far as the future welfare of their own souls is concerned, it is sure to become wrecked, if that motive is not altogether disinterested and unselfish. When Śrī Kṛishṇa appealed to Arjuna's lower selfish motives to induce him to perform his duty, He evidently wanted to impress upon Arjuna that the great work of vindicating justice, which was to be carried out by means of the war, ought not to remain unaccomplished for the simple reason that he could not

understand the nature of duty aright, and therefore would not fight like a true Kshattriya. Śrī-Kṛishṇa very naturally wanted to see that this work of vindicating justice was carried out anyhow, even by means of an appeal, if necessary, to the low selfish motives of Arjuna. But He felt it to be at the same time incumbent upon Him to let Arjuna know that, if he undertook to fight in the war with the lower motives of selfishness, he might well enough be doing what was expected of him as a Kshattriya warrior, but would, nevertheless, be causing the degradation of his own soul and endangering the chances of its illumination and emancipation. Everywhere it so happens, that social welfare is considerably less affected by the wrong motives of those who perform their duties well, than by the non-performance or wrong performance of their duties themselves by others. It is not of course intended to be denied here that, when selfishness pollutes the very fountain-source of all good conduct, any thing like the proper performance of duty, even as judged from a purely external standpoint, becomes very difficult of accomplishment. It is almost a contradiction in terms to say that there can be such a thing at all as the selfish performance of satisfactory duty. Nevertheless, we can easily distinguish the life, the correctness whereof is due to self-interest, from that other life, the worthiness of which is the result of the unselfish sense of duty. To acquire such a sense of duty, one has to rise above all personal desires and aversions by becoming free from the misleading influence of pleasure and pain, of gain and loss, of victory and defeat, which do not deserve to be adopted as trustworthy psychological means for the determination of the true ethics of conduct. Only thus may one avoid sin.

एषा तेऽभिहिता साङ्ख्ये बुद्धिर्योगेत्विमां शृणु ।
बुध्द्या युक्तो यया पार्थ कर्मबन्धं प्रहास्यसि ॥ ३९ ॥

39. This, that you have been told (so far), is the view as relating to *Sāṅkhya*; and listen (now) to this (other), as corresponding to *Yōga*, by adopting which view (in life) you will get rid of the bondage of *karma*.

Our well-known commentaries on the *Gītā* explain the word *sāṅkhya* here by *jñāna*, and the word *yōga* by *karman*. It seems

to be fairly generally understood that *sāṅkhya* and *yōga* do not here denote the two systems of Hindu philosophy that commonly go by those names. It appears to me that *sāṅkhya* and *yōga* here mean more or less what are in the English language denoted by 'theory' and 'practice'. Indeed the two systems of philosophy going by these names may themselves be conceived to be related to each other as theory and practice. Up to this point Śrī-Kṛishṇa was urging upon the attention of Arjuna what may well be called the speculative or the theoretical aspect of what He considered to be the true philosophy of conduct; and now He begins to teach him how this theory is to be worked out in practice, how the results of His speculative reasoning are to be applied to the actual guidance of man's daily life in society. Merely to justify and urge motiveless good conduct, such as is absolutely free from all selfishness, is not enough to enable men to live their lives well in practice. I have often heard it said that what is known as disinterested action is utterly impossible. Sometimes, however, some men are seen to be willing to grant more readily that such a thing as disinterested malevolence is possible as well as observable in the world of their own social surroundings. Nevertheless, even these are often prone to maintain that, so far as the doing of good in life is concerned, such a thing as disinterested benevolence is both impossible and unknown. The very fact, that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has commanded the motiveless and unselfish performance of duty, as the best means by which one may become free from sin, shows that He must have believed in the perfect possibility of such a performance of duty. How, then, are men to acquire the power to do their duties thus? This is the question which is here taken up for consideration.

Śrī-Kṛishṇa was undoubtedly of opinion that the immortality of the soul and the possibility of absolutely disinterested action are both practically demonstrable. If they could not be so demonstrated, the whole of the speculative teaching of ethics, which Śrī-Kṛishṇa gave to Arjuna, would prove to be a baseless fabric of no practical value. If we hold a metaphysical position, which is incapable of actual demonstration by practical application, and build thereon an ethical theory of conduct that is impossible of being adopted in life, and if by means of such metaphysical and ethical ideas we try to guide

our lives aright, then our endeavour cannot but prove to be anything other than futile altogether. It cannot be therefore hard for us to see how it is a matter of very great importance to demonstrate practically the true immortality of the soul and the possibility of motivelessness in relation to the performance of duties in life. That is evidently why Śrī-Kṛishṇa, after expounding at some length the theory underlying the ethical problem of conduct, began to give to Arjuna the teaching in regard to the practical application of that theory to life, so that thereby men might learn well the art of living their lives aright, and the truth of the theory itself might have the scope of being tested by the criterion of actual experience. Hence it is that, if we understand the *yōga*, or the practical application to life, of this theory of sinless conduct, we become free from the bondage of *karma*. I have already mentioned to you briefly what this bondage of *karma* means. The Sanskrit word *karman* commonly means work, and includes also in its significance the internal impress, which every work that we do leaves upon our constitution, so as to affect our nature physically, mentally and morally. This internal impress, which is due to the life that we live, is further conceived to be transmissible from embodiment to embodiment in the course of the soul's career of reincarnation; and all our inherited internal tendencies and potencies are indeed explained to arise in this manner. In fact such transmitted tendencies themselves keep the soul imprisoned in matter; and unless they are annihilated, there can be no liberation of the soul from the prison-house of matter and the bondage of *karma*. Utter unselfishness alone can cause the required annihilation of these bondage-compelling tendencies; and to attain the *summum bonum* of the soul's emancipation, we have inevitably to learn how to live the life of unselfish virtue and dutiful righteousness. How this is to be done, is taught in what constitutes the *yōga* or the practical application of the philosophy of conduct as propounded by Śrī-Kṛishṇa.

नेहाभिक्रमनाशोऽस्ति प्रत्यवायो न विद्यते ।
स्वल्पमप्यस्य धर्मस्य त्रायते महतो भयात् ॥ ४० ॥

40. Here, there is no loss of effort put forth, and there is no reverse through obstruction. Even a little of this moral virtue delivers (one) from great fear.

What Śrī-Krishṇa means here by the word *dharma* seems to me to be clearly the moral virtue of the discipline of unselfishness. His opinion distinctly is that we need not be afraid that, in endeavouring to put His theoretical teachings regarding the philosophy of conduct into actual practice, no good will result unto us until we successfully go through the whole course of the proposed discipline. There are of course cases, in which we cannot derive the particular good that we have in view, until we actually reach the very end of the work which aims at securing it. We are, however, told that, in the case of this particular moral discipline, it is not so. It is not necessary here to wait till we reach the very end in our attempt to put theory into practice, before we begin to see that we have been able to realise some good from such an attempt. Whatever small success we achieve in our attempt, and howsoever little we move along in the line of the moral discipline indicated by this theory of metaphysical ethics, to that extent our endeavour is sure to fructify in increasing our moral strength and improving our fitness for freedom and for self-realisation. There is also another noteworthy point about this course of discipline, in that there is really no serious obstacle in the way of our adopting it more or less successfully in practical life, inasmuch as no obstacle and no opposing force of any kind can here compel the aspirant to retrace his steps and thus make him lose the advantage of any progress which he may have already accomplished. Since there is no turning back in the march of this moral discipline, and no step forward that is either aimlessly or uselessly taken, it surely must have the power of delivering us from great fear and leading us on nearer and nearer to our divinely appointed goal of self-realisation and God-attainment. As a matter of fact every theory of conduct, which rests on the sure foundation of truth ascertained philosophically, must possess these characteristics in relation to its fitness to be put well into actual practice by all aspiring persons. Indeed such a theory, if good and true, must naturally be well suited for adoption by all sorts of persons who are of varying capacities and in different conditions of life. From its very nature having to be such, it follows that it must be capable of strengthening every man who adopts it to some extent, and of strengthening the best of men to the extent of enabling them to win their salvation through realising the whole truth of all the already mentioned

theoretical conclusions regarding duty and righteousness. The philosophy, which is too complex to be securely put into practice by weak men, may, through its very want of simplicity, be easily made out to be mostly unrelated to truth and unfounded on reality.

व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिरेकेह कुरुनन्दन ।
बहुशाखा ह्यनन्ताश्च बुद्धयोऽव्यवसायिनाम् ॥ ४१ ॥

41. O Arjuna, that disposition, the nature whereof is characterised by persevering effort, is (always) one (and the same) here. The dispositions of those, who are wanting in persevering effort, are many-branched and endless.

With this *śloka* begins the teaching of Śrī-Kṛishṇa to Arjuna as to how it is possible for men to realise in actual life the two fundamental theoretical considerations on which the whole of His philosophy of conduct is made to rest. The first of these two considered conclusions is, as you know, that the soul is immortal; and the second is that absolutely unselfish and disinterested action is perfectly possible. In speaking of the practical realisability of both these theoretical positions, Śrī-Kṛishṇa at first took the latter into consideration. The reason for this is, that that same discipline, which is needed to enable us to do well our duties in life in an altogether disinterested manner, if carried to a still higher point of perfection, will lead us also to the realisation of the immateriality and the consequent immortality of the soul. The idea that is specially brought out in this *śloka* is, that the mind which perseveringly puts forth effort becomes more and more capable of concentration, and thus more and more powerful in discovering truth and in sustaining the righteous life. The moral value of steady and well-aimed effort consists in its enabling the mind to be firm and keeping it free from all those deviations that are caused by temptations. If we use our mental energy fully for the performance of our duties, it thereby becomes possible for us to succeed to a large extent in commanding the needed power for concentrating the mind. If the mind is allowed to be unengaged, the resulting tendency is to make it idly busy and prone to court and yield to temptations of all sorts. Therefore, in the case of the

man, who wishes to maintain his mind in one and the same condition always, the first requisite is that his mind should perseveringly put forth well-aimed effort, and should not be allowed to wander from motive to motive and object to object. Accordingly Śrī-Kṛishṇa began to give this teaching of the *yōga*, or the practical application, of His theory of right conduct, with the enunciation of the great moral and intellectual value of persevering mental effort, whereby, through increased power of attention and mental concentration and self-control, man is gradually helped on to perceive the reality of truth and the righteousness of duty. It is indeed wonderful to note how so much of human morality and human wisdom is dependent upon man's power of sustained mental effort and concentration of attention. There is no greater enemy to man's moral progress than having to live an aimless life of indolent inaction. That strenuous action is necessary for the achievement of man's material progress is very generally established beyond doubt by the experience of all human communities; and yet it may not be quite easy to see that, in the absence of well-directed and well-maintained mental endeavour, men are apt to miss the very purpose of their embodied existence, and can never hope to aim at, and achieve in the end, the emancipation of their enslaved souls. Therefore, all those, who seek to advance along the path of moral and spiritual evolution, so that they may in the end reach the divine goal of soul-salvation through self-realisation and God-realisation, have at once to take care that their lives are devoted, with a notable singleness of purpose, to the unceasing performance of high and noble duties unselfishly undertaken and unselfishly accomplished. How these ideas are further worked out by Śrī-Kṛishṇa in His philosophy of conduct, we shall try to learn in our next class.

viii

In our last class we not only dealt with the concluding part of the teaching that is denoted in this chapter of the *Gītā* by the name of *sāṅkhya*, but also just began to take into consideration the teaching connected with what is therein called in contrast as *yōga*. I explained to you then that the words *sāṅkhya* and *yōga* are respectively used in that context in the sense of 'speculative theory' and 'practical application'. The thing is, that the

speculative theoretical statement of the philosophical doctrines, which ought to determine conduct, has been first given to us, and the practical realisation of the truth of those doctrines in the moral and religious life of humanity is taken up next for examination and explanation. In this already given theoretical statement of the doctrines bearing upon the philosophy of conduct, there are certain important points, which we have particularly to remember. The first of these is the point with which Śrī-Kṛishṇa actually started the discussion; it is the great truth of the immortality of the soul. Then our attention was drawn to the question of why it is that the soul, which is immaterial, immutable and immortal, and is therefore intrinsically free and essentially different from matter, becomes confined in a material embodiment. We have been told, in this connection, that it is the tendency of almost all embodied beings to be attracted by pleasure and repelled by pain, and that this tendency itself is responsible for the imprisonment of their souls in matter. To yield to this tendency is to strengthen more and more what we may call the potential involution of *karma* from re-incarnation to re-incarnation. The successive course of the soul's continued re-incarnation in embodiment after embodiment is caused by the *karma* which is so produced and accumulated; and this is another point of importance in Śrī-Kṛishṇa's theory of conduct. *Karma*, accordingly, helps the continuance of the soul's bondage in matter. But what is it that originated this bondage?

Here naturally crops up the question of the commencement of *karma*, and I request your permission to digress a little to be able to deal with this question. *Karma* is held to be *anādi*, which really means that we cannot succeed in finding out its beginning. This fact, that we cannot discover the beginning of *karma*, is no reason why we should not believe in its existence and in its effects. For instance, we cannot deny the existence of a river for the mere reason that its origin is not known to us. We are told that, in the same manner, we cannot deny the existence of *karma*, the truth whereof is as we know, so well vouched for by our experience, merely because we cannot discover how and why it is that the immaterial and immortal soul first came to be materially embodied so as to be affected by *karma*. How and why it is that the soul first became entangled

in a material embodiment, is a problem to which no conclusively satisfactory answer can be given. But the answer which is sometimes given, and which surely cannot be said to be altogether unsatisfactory, is well worthy of being taken into consideration by us. And that answer is, that God, who is responsible for the creation of this universe and the existence of us all therein—our souls and our embodiments included—must have in the beginning conceived that it was desirable to make the souls stronger and more self-reliant than they were in their insulated condition of absolute separation from matter. With the object of subjecting them to the requisite discipline to make them stronger and more self-reliant, He introduced them into this material world of pains and pleasures, of temptations and trials, and of successes and failures, so that by struggling in such a world it may become possible for them to equip themselves with the needed capacity to overcome all such obstacles as may stand in the way of their regaining their innate luminosity and freedom through complete self-realisation. It is much like sending a young man to a gymnasium, so that he may therein receive such bodily training and discipline as will make him strong enough to overcome physical trials and muscular opposition easily. By placing this view of the matter before you, I do not want it to be understood that it is either philosophically conclusive or otherwise well established. If, however, we believe in a God who is responsible for this universe being what it is, and if further we believe that, as the very laws of nature indicate, the organization of the universe is teleologically purposive, that everything therein works towards an appointed end, and that unfailing harmony is in fact the underlying plan of the universe, then this explanation as to why it is that the soul at first became entangled in a material body cannot be easily pronounced to be unmeaning or absurd. Anyhow, it appears to be evident that to yield to the tendencies of desire and aversion caused by pleasure and pain is apt to give rise to that binding influence of *karma*, which compels the continuance of the soul's imprisonment in matter. And yet our tendencies of desire and aversion are themselves due to the contact of the soul with its material embodiment. Thus *karma*, which is itself an effect of the soul being embodied, is further conceived to be the cause of the continuance of its embodied state, the cause which carries it from re-incarnation to re-incarnation.

Whether this way of accounting for the origin of what is called our *karma-pravāha* or 'stream of *karma*' is satisfactory or not, it is clear that we have ample evidence to show that there is really such a thing as the 'stream of *karma*' observable in the universe. Its existence and reality may be demonstrated in various ways, through observation as well as reasoning. We find that in this world all men are not born with the same advantages, with the same capacities or the same innate endowments. And we may well say with the *Vēdāntin* that this sort of congenital difference between different individuals is due to their previous *karma*. In holding such a position we become able, as the Vēdānta distinctly declares, to guard the unerring justice of God, who is our Creator, from the jarring imputation of unaccountable partialities and predilections. In accordance with the law of *karma*, it is we that make or mar ourselves, although that law itself is ordained by God. There are, moreover, certain things connected with what may be called the natal potency of man, which heredity alone cannot explain in a fully satisfactory manner. For instance, the man of genius is not always born out of a line of ancestors who have themselves been geniuses; more often he is what they call a freak of nature. How are we to account for this freak? The reign of law in nature has been recognised to be so universal and so predominant that it has become quite impossible for us in these days to think of her as being given to indulge in freaks at all. Therefore, the man of genius is a freak of nature only in the sense that he comes into existence very rarely and in a manner which we cannot easily comprehend. When we understand that nature works always in accordance with laws, then even her genius-generating freak has to be traced to the operation of some law other than or over and above the inadequate law of heredity. If we conceive the impressed potency of the endowment of the man of genius to be the result of the accumulated *karma* of his previous embodied lives, it will be easy for us to see how such a potency may occasionally assert itself against the limitations of physical and physiological heredity. *Karma* can account for instinct quite as well as heredity does; and even when heredity is chosen in preference to *karma* to explain the origin of animal instincts, we have inevitably to believe in the transmissibility of physiologically impressed potentialities from generation to generation.

It cannot be hard to see that the value of practice in all our courses of training, and the very efficacy of education as known to us, are dependent upon the fact that every thought we think, every feeling we experience, and every deed we do, leaves its impress more or less permanently on our inner nature. Considerations like these ought to enable us to know that the 'stream of *karma*' really exists, and that the law of *karma* may be proved to be well founded upon ascertained truth.

The next important point in the philosophy of conduct as expounded by Śrī-Kṛishṇa relates to the connected problems concerning duty and sin. We have been able to learn that Śrī Kṛishṇa is of opinion that it is, under no circumstances whatsoever, possible for any man to get over the obligation of having to do his duty. In this connection we have had to see how the life of every man who lives in society has necessarily an individual as well as a social aspect. The former of these two aspects is largely confined to himself, while the latter is more or less intimately related to the comprehensive life of the society as a whole. We have had further to see in this connection that the obligation of duty arises in the life of every man in relation to both these aspects of it; and duty itself is accordingly classified by some as duty to self and duty to society. What is demanded of us is that we should understand that the socially, or the more comprehensively, serviceable aspect of the life of a man is really more important than the individually, or the more limitedly, serviceable aspect thereof. In other words, a man's duty to society should never be allowed to be set aside by his duty to himself. Now let us examine the position of Arjuna in this light. He was a Kshattriya born in a royal family and trained to be a warrior. Moreover, he had to fill an assigned place in an army as one of its leading commanders. He had thus his duties as a soldier and a prince. You know that the duties of such a soldier and prince have necessarily a large social value; for it is by the performance of those duties by such persons in an appropriate manner that the very maintenance of order becomes possible in society. Without the fighting force of the soldier in reserve and ready for use, none of the known tendencies of common undisciplined people in favour of disobedience and disorder can be induced to fall easily into the

line of restrained order and peaceful progress. Therefore Arjuna's obligations as a great soldier could not at all be allowed to be superseded by his obligations as a relation or friend or disciple. The man who does not do the duty, which is required of him for maintaining the welfare of society, and still lives with ease in that society as one of its protected members, cannot certainly be said to be leading a really worthy or virtuous life. Hence it is that it became the inevitable duty of Arjuna to fight in the war. And if he declined to perform such a duty, which was so obligatory, he would surely be committing sin. That sin can and does arise only from neglect of duty may thus be made abundantly clear. We shall learn later on that the determination of a man's duties in life is itself dependent upon the qualifications which he possesses for the performance of one or other of the various kinds of work required for supporting and sustaining the healthy life of society and civilisation. But let me now draw your attention to the great fact that the *sāṅkhya* teaching of the theory of conduct, as given here, declares emphatically that it is inevitably obligatory on every man to do whatever happens to be his duty in life, whether it be pleasant or unpleasant, agreeable or disagreeable, or high or low in the estimation of the common people who are generally unwise and unthinking. Accordingly, it is only by doing his duty well that a man saves himself from the danger of becoming a sinner. No work, which is done as duty, can in itself pollute a man with sin.

There is one other matter of importance in connection with this question of the intrinsic sinlessness of duty. This other matter relates to the motive with which a man has to do his duty, if thereby he wishes to save his soul from sin and enable it to become emancipated and blissful. We have seen that, so far as externally ascertainable social welfare is concerned, it is much more important to see that all men and women do their respective duties correctly in life than to spy into the personal motives which actuate them in the performance of those duties. It is not that the example of selfishly done duty is not unwholesome and infectious; nor is it unhesitatingly admitted by this that the perfect performance of duty is possible even with selfish motives working strongly from within. Nevertheless, in so far as the outer work of society is concerned, it

does not matter with what motives people do their duties, so long as the work they have to do is carried out well enough. But in so far as securing the sinlessness of man and the salvation of his soul is concerned, it is certainly necessary for him to make sure that he does his duties not only in the manner in which they are externally expected to be done, but also absolutely without any selfish motive of any kind actuating him from within. Otherwise, even duty will tend to produce sin and thus strengthen and confirm the bondage of the soul. In this theoretical exposition of the philosophy of conduct, four important principles are therefore to be taken note of by us: and they are—(1) the immortality of the soul, (2) *karma* and its work in regard to the soul's material bondage, (3) the obligatoriness of the performance of duty on the part of all, and (4) the necessity of utter unselfishness in respect of the motives actuating the performance of the duty which is so obligatory. After enabling Arjuna to know that the soul is immaterial, immortal and eternal, and that pleasures and pains are due to the association of the immaterial soul with matter in the embodied condition of its incarnation, and that this association is itself due to *karma*, Śrī-Kṛishṇa taught him how he might, if he chose, destroy the material bondage of the soul, and thus enable it to realise its own true and blissful immortality. Our success in achieving this end of life is dependent upon the power we have to perform all our duties in life in an absolutely unselfish manner regardless of all resulting pleasures and pains. By acquiring a strong will-power, it becomes possible for people to rise above the influence of pleasures and plains. Anyhow, we have to learn that our title is only to perform our work in life, whatever that may happen to be, and that we have no title at all to claim as our own the results which accrue from our performing our duties well. It is not therefore unnatural that special stress is laid here on the necessity of selflessness even in connection with the doing of duty.

It is now the time to answer the objection that the manner, in which Arjuna was induced to fight in the great war by means of an argument based on the immortality of the soul, is equally suited to justify the killing of men even by dacoits and murderers. It has been said that, if a soldier may kill men in battles because their souls are

immortal, the murderer also may freely commit murder for the reason that the soul of the murdered person is similarly immortal. Such an objection is known to have been raised by a Christian bishop against the ethical teaching given in the *Gītā*. In the case of the soldier, who fights in a just war, killing has become his duty. Does the act of murder ever become the duty of the murderer? Even the murderer himself cannot think that it ever does. The next point for us to consider here is whether the murderer, in actually committing the murder, is free from all attachment to the results accruing therefrom. There is invariably in him some unhealthy motive of some kind roused by anger and selfishness, which impels him to do his murderous deed. Some acquisition of pleasure or avoidance of pain or some foul revenge is at the bottom of the act of murder committed by the murderer. Contrast this condition of the mind of the murderer with that of the soldier, who kills his enemies in battle, because it has become his inevitable duty to do so. Then you will see how Śrī-Kṛishṇa's argument regarding the ethics of conduct, which is based on the immortality of the soul and also on *karma* and duty and unselfishness, is not applicable at all to the murderer in the same manner in which it is applicable to the true soldier. This sort of objection against the teaching given in the *Gītā* is due to both mental and moral impatience on the part of the objector, and is invariably raised without taking into consideration the whole of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's argument and the continuity of thought which runs through it. It is an essential part of the ethical teaching contained in Śrī-Kṛishṇa's theory of the philosophy of conduct that duty done as duty without any selfish motive of any kind can never give rise to sin. It is only thus that the soldier, who does his duty well and unselfishly in war by killing and routing his enemies, does not thereby become tainted with sin, even though that duty of his happens to be nothing short of the free and fierce infliction of death on others. The demonstrable immortality of the soul and its essential difference from matter are shown to lead us logically to the obligatoriness involved in the doing of duty; and when that duty happens to be the infliction of death, the established immortality of the soul takes away the terror of death very largely, and makes it possible for men to realise further that, in doing the duty of inflicting death with absolute freedom from the taint of selfishness, no true soldier

ever destroys anything like the destiny of the soul of him on whom death is inflicted; and it goes without saying that such a soldier does not pollute himself with sin. Death dealt out justly to him, who deserves death, does not foil the future of his soul; nor can such infliction of death pollute the dutiful death-dealer with sin. Does Śrī-Kṛishṇa's theory of ethics, so resting on the immortality of the soul, really tend to place the sinful murderer on the same moral plane as the sinless soldier? Let impartial truth answer the question.

Now in connection with the way, in which these central principles in this theory bearing on the philosophy of conduct may be actually realised in life, we meet with two great difficulties. The first difficulty relates to the practical realisation of the immortality of the soul; and the second difficulty is in relation to the actual possibility of the performance of duties without any attachment to results. Śrī-Kṛishṇa has told us that both these cardinal points in his philosophy, namely, the immortality of the soul and the possibility of the unattached performance of duties in life, can be demonstrated to be true in the light of the personal experience of all such worthy and capable investigators as are fit and willing to undergo the required discipline and to perform the needed psychological experiment. Therefore, starting with the object of demonstrating that it is possible for men to realise the immorality of the soul through their own personal experience, and also to acquire that state of mental evenness whereby they may do all their duties without any attachment to the results accruing therefrom, Śrī-Kṛishṇa began to teach the *yōga* or the practical procedure relating to the application of these theoretical doctrines to men's conduct in life. The practical endeavour to live up to such an ethical theory is, He has told us, so valuable and so helpful to the moral progress of mankind that even a little of it is well calculated to do them much good. As far as our endeavour goes, and as far as we succeed therein, so far it is a distinct gain to us. The very first thing which is necessary for attaining any success in such an endeavour is to make our minds steady; and it is altogether impossible to have a continuously steady mind unless we aim at, and are earnestly devoted to, the performance of some work or other which has devolved upon us as our duty. As I told you the other day, it is the mind of the idle man

that is most busy in the doing of mischief. Hence this general proposition that has been laid down here in regard to the moral value of unselfish endeavour, to the effect that it safeguards the mind from wandering in response to misleading temptations. And in the *ślōkas*, which we now take up for study, it is rightly pointed out that it is not every kind of work that can thus steady the mind, and that the work, the aim whereof is the selfish acquisition of pleasure and satisfaction, can never produce this desired result. Work, which is swayed by interest, weakens the mental stability as well as the moral strength of the worker very naturally, for it is in the nature of interest itself to vary from moment to moment and so to multiply the bonds of material attachment. But that other kind of work, which is guided by pure unselfish reason and a strong sense of duty, markedly tends to increase the mental as well as the moral power of the worker. Śrī-Kṛishṇa has, therefore, declared that interested work, even when done under the dictates of religion, is not so very helpful to moral progress, and has explained that position of His by a reference to the ritualistic religion of the Vēdas, in which the performance of certain sacrifices for procuring certain celestial pleasures and enjoyments is considered to be the chief aim of man's religious life here upon the earth. To make the mind steady and one-pointed, the work we undertake in life must be such as is unassociated with selfish desires. Even where the association of interested desires with the performance of duties is due to certain accepted scriptural commandments—even there, it is certain to strengthen the common human tendency in favour of selfishness and thereby undermine the high moral purpose of human life itself. This is exactly what Śrī-Kṛishṇa declares in the following *ślōkas*:—

यामिमां पुष्पितां वाचं प्रवदन्त्यविपश्चितः ।
वेदवादरताः पार्थ नान्यदस्तीति वादिनः ॥ ४२ ॥
कामात्मानः स्वर्गपरा जन्मकर्मफलप्रदाम् ।
क्रियाविशेषबहुलां भोगैश्वर्यगतिं प्रति ॥ ४३ ॥
भोगैश्वर्यप्रसक्तानां तयापहृतचेतसाम् ।
व्यवसायात्मिका बुद्धिः समाधौ न विधीयते ॥ ४४ ॥

42—44. O Arjuna, in the case of those, who, being attached to enjoyments and the power of lordship, have their understanding carried away by that vainly flowery language, which is (calculated to be) productive of birth (through re-incarnation) and of the fruit of *karma*, and is (very) varied (in import) on account of the (many) peculiar rites (it inculcates), and which (again) is, with a view to the acquisition of enjoyments and the power of lordship, given out by those unwise persons, who are ever inclined to talk about the Vēdas and say that there is nothing else, and who, with (their) nature characterised by cupidity, are devoted to (the attainment of) *Svarga* —(in the case of such), the mind, characterised by endeavour, is not fitted to be in attentive concentration.

The language which is described here as *pushpitā vāk* is that kind of it, in relation to which we may, as it were, see an abundance of flowering which leads to the yielding of no fruit in the end. It is such language as at first sight seems to be beautiful and true, but is, on further examination, seen to be disappointing. *Pushpitā vāk*, I have therefore translated as "vainly flowery language". It is said that there are certain unwise and unlearned people who speak such language. They are constantly engaged in talks and discussions bearing on the Vēdas, on their character as divine revelations, on the value and authoritativeness of the ritualistic commandments which they give, and so on. The reference here is clearly to the upholders of Vēdic ritualism, as distinguished from those who uphold Vēdāntic self-conquest and self-realisation. By speaking of the upholders of Vēdic ritualism as unwise persons, Śrī-Kṛishṇa does not wholly condemn them; His objection seems to have been chiefly against those people declaring that there is no other path of worthy religious life than that of rituals and sacrifices. Śrī-Kṛishṇa has taught that there are other and even better paths. The religious life of those who follow the Vēdic path of ritualism is not a total failure according to Him. Even these persons are considered by Him, as we shall soon see, to be able to derive such results from their life

of worship as are in keeping with the nature and quality of that worship. The kind of religion and worship that one adopts here in this life is held to be invariably a true index of the realisation that one arrives at in the course of the progress of one's soul to its natural and ultimate destiny. This law is commonly spoken of in Sanskrit as *yathākratunyāya*. It cannot be denied that it is possible for men to have a higher or a lower religious realisation. And the unwise persons here mentioned are those whose religion is such as is apt to bestow on them a lower realisation. Therefore their ignorance consists, not in their holding that the worship of Vēdic gods by means of sacrifices is capable of yielding unto them the results they desire, but in holding that there is no other path of worthy religious realisation, even though their own religious life is actuated by the selfish desire for enjoyments and for power. They aim at *Svarga*, but not at *mōksha*; and what they aim at, they achieve. *Svarga*, you know, is the celestial world of the gods; and it is considered to be much like our earthly world, inasmuch as in it also there are, as here, pleasures and pains, satisfactions and disappointments. It is, however, said that the pleasures of the celestial world are more unmixed and more delicious and ethereal in their character than our comparatively gross ones here are. But the idea underlying *mōksha* is a different one; it is nothing short of the blissful emancipation arising from a perfected self-realisation won by the soul which is in itself immaterial and immortal. Here the aspirant's endeavour is not directed to the attainment of pleasure and power, as they give rise to that force of *karma* which compels the naturally free and self-luminous soul to become limited and imprisoned in matter so as to undergo one after another a series of countless re-births. Thus the highest good aimed at by the Vēdānta is different from that which is aimed at by Vēdic ritualism. And another thing to be noted about this path of sacrifices is, that there is an abundance of peculiarly ritualistic work to be performed in connection with those sacrifices. This kind of complex and many-pointed work, even when religiously done, does not give rise to the steadiness and one-pointedness of the mind. Therefore the minds of those, who are attached to enjoyments and pleasures and are engaged in bestowing attention on a multiplicity of details connected with the proper performance of complex and laborious sacrifices, are altogether unfit

to get into that state of one-pointed concentration, whereby both self-conquest and self-realisation are made more and more easy for all those who strive to attain them. It is in fact the psychological culture of unselfishness, through the weakening of the tendencies in favour of selfishness and through the strengthening of the controlling and restraining power of the will, that forms the main feature of the practical aspect of the philosophy of conduct as expounded in the *Bhagavadgītā*; and it is to this highly practical problem of the culture of unselfishness that we shall have to direct our attention in some of our future classes.

ix

On the last occasion we were studying that portion of the *Gītā* wherein Śrī-Kṛishṇa pointed out to Arjuna how it is that, in the conduct of what is often called *karma-yōga* or the right practice of duty, the very fact of a man having to do some unselfish work and devoting himself in earnest to the performance of that work tends to strengthen his power to concentrate his mind and withdraw it from distracting influences. Śrī-Kṛishṇa, you know, has laid great stress on the fact that a man's attachment to the results of the work that he performs is apt to distract him and to weaken his power of mental concentration, even though that work may happen to be what is religiously ordained. In what follows, you will observe that this same idea is further developed and explained :—

त्रैगुण्यविषया वेदा निस्त्रैगुण्यो भवार्जुन ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थो निर्योगक्षेम आत्मवान् ॥ ४५ ॥

45. The Vēdas have the three *guṇas* for their subject-matter. Do you, O Arjuna, become free from the three *guṇas*, free from the pairs (of opposites), ever established in *sattva*, free from *yōga* and *kshēma*, and possessed of self-mastery.

This *ślōka* reads almost like a riddle. Here the word *traiguṇya* means the three *guṇas* or qualities which are conceived to belong to the primordial matter which is known under the name of *prakṛiti* in the Sāṅkhya Philosophy of Kapila. These *guṇas* are called, as

you know, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The idea underlying the conception of these three qualities or attributes is capable of being explained somewhat in the following manner. Matter is conceived to be dull and immobile and inert, when under the domination of the quality of *tamas*; that is, all those conditions of matter wherein inertness is most manifest are held to be due to the preponderance of *tamas*. Similarly *rajas* represents the highly active condition of matter, wherein it is full of enlivening and aggressive energy. And lastly *sattva* represents the steady condition of balanced motion and even life. The whole of this conception of the *guṇas* of *prakṛiti* is explained well in Kapila's Sāṅkhya Philosophy in relation to the evolution and the involution of the universe. In this system of Hindu philosophy, a kind of primordial non-differentiated matter, which is called by the name of *mūlaprakṛiti* or merely *prakṛiti*, is conceived to form the substratum of the universe and to undergo modifications and give rise to the various kinds and conditions of differentiated matter.

मूलप्रकृतिरविकृतिर्महदाद्याः प्रकृतिविकृतयः सप्त ।
षोडशकस्तु विकारो न प्रकृतिर्न विकृतिः पुरुषः ॥

This stanza from the *Sāṅkhyatattva-kaumudī* gives the view of Kapila in regard to the ultimate as well as the proximate principles that one may arrive at on analysing the whole universe as known to man. The primordial *prakṛiti* is thus the unproduced basis of the external world. Out of this are evolved seven other principles, which, while they are themselves produced, are also producers of other principles. These seven are *mahat*, *ahaṅkāra*, and the five *tanmātras*, that is, the subtle bases of the five *bhūtas* or elements as they are called. Out of these are evolved sixteen other principles, namely, the five *bhūtas* or elements, the five organs of action, the five organs of the senses, and the internal organ or faculty of attention known as *manas*. These sixteen principles do not, through any further modification, give rise to other produced principles. Lastly there is the principle known as *purusha* or soul, which is neither a produced thing nor a producer; it is a principle which is unmodified and immodifiable. All the processes of physical and physiological evolution in the universe are, moreover, conceived to be designed for helping on the ultimate

emancipation of the soul ; and in connection with these processes the *guṇas* of *prakṛiti* are held to play an important part. They are described thus in the same work :—

सत्त्वं लघु प्रकाशकमिष्टमुपष्टम्भकं चलं च रजः ।
गुरु वरणकमेव तमः प्रदीपवच्चार्थतो वृत्तिः ॥

"*Sattva* is light and illuminating and is desirable. *Rajas* is stimulating and active. *Tamas* is wholly heavy and darkening. The function (of these) relates to the purpose of the soul and is (carried out) like that of a lamp." The three *guṇas* are therefore to be understood as three attributes of *prakṛiti* or primordial matter, causing all its processes of evolution and involution, so that in the end the liberation of the matter-entangled soul becomes positively well assured. Owing to the close relation, which is further conceived to exist between men's physical constitution on the one hand and their mental and moral temperament on the other, these *guṇas* are often understood to have certain mental and moral significations also ; and this we shall learn in detail in the course of our study of the further teachings of Śrī-Kṛishṇa as given in some of the concluding chapters of the *Bhagavadgītā*. It is clear from all this that these *guṇas* are essentially unrelated to the soul, although they are seen to be the concomitant attributes of all its various material embodiments. Therefore, that scripture, which has the three *guṇas* for its subject-matter, cannot deal with that condition of the soul, wherein it is absolutely free from the bondage of matter. And when a soul becomes embodied in a material embodiment, it may have any one of these three *guṇas* markedly preponderant in it. If *tamas* is preponderant, the embodied individual on the whole manifests *tāmasa* characteristics in relation to his moral and intellectual life ; that is, he happens to be dull, stupid, and not much above the level of animalism in his aims and aspirations. The preponderance of *rajas* in an individual's embodiment makes him *rājasa* in character, impelling him to be active, energetic and aggressively acquisitive. Similarly the preponderance of *sattva* makes an individual *sāttvika* in character, so that he becomes prone to be calm, resigned, unselfish and dutiful. Some modern psychologists maintain that the structure and the composition of the brain of a man

are very largely responsible for the intellectual power and the moral strength which he possesses and displays in life. Whether a man's brain itself is or is not moulded, so as to have its peculiarly endowed condition, by some previously existing cause or causes, why it is that the brain of one man is endowed more or less markedly with one kind of mental and moral fitness and capacity, while that of another man is endowed quite differently, are questions which we need not now endeavour to answer in detail. We have come to know already that it is by means of *karma* and heredity that the *Vēdāntin* arrives at his answer to these questions. At all events, this much has to be admitted by all—that, in so far as any individual is concerned, there is a close relation between the structure and the composition of his brain on the one hand, and the condition of his intelligence and character on the other. We may also now see how, according to the quality or *guṇa* of the *prakṛiti*, which determines a man's intellectual power and moral character, his tastes and aspirations are also determined. If his intelligence and character are of a superior order, he can rarely have low and unworthy tastes or aspirations in life. It may hence be seen that what is implied here is that the three qualities of the *prakṛiti* are responsible not only for the intellectual power and the moral strength of character in men, but also for the nature of the aims and aspirations which impel them to live and to labour. It has thus to be understood that the kind of pleasure which a man seeks to obtain, and the kind of pain which he seeks to avoid, are both ultimately determined by the preponderant quality of the *prakṛiti* of which his body is composed. If looked at in this light, the statement, that the Vēdas deal with the three *guṇas* and their tendencies, becomes clearly intelligible. Accordingly, all those that follow the sacrificial religion of the Vēdas are *kāmātmānaḥ*—actuated by desires. As such, they cannot free themselves from the bondage of *karma*, and can never hope to attain the enduring bliss of *mōksha*. The Vēdic path of ritualism, known as *karma-mārga*, is therefore declared to be unsuited for self-realisation and the moral culture of absolute unselfishness.

Let us further note that the injunction given to Arjuna in this *ślōka*, to the effect that he should become free from the influence

of the three qualities of *prakṛiti*, does not refer to that freedom from the bondage of matter, which comes to one when one attains the state of *mōksha*; for Śrī-Kṛishṇa did not call upon Arjuna here to see that his soul was emancipated at once, although it is obvious that he was called upon to know and to believe that *mōksha* is indeed the true *summum bonum* of life. What is, moreover, to the point here is, that Śrī-Kṛishṇa wanted Arjuna to be always established in the quality of *sattva*, at the same time that He advised him to be free from all the three *guṇas*. In this statement there is really no contradiction in terms. It is obviously meant that, in the composition of the bodies owned by all such individual souls as are embodied, all the three qualities of *prakṛiti* make themselves manifest, and that yet it is invariably only one out of these three qualities which is preponderant in the constitution of every such embodied being. Which quality it is that preponderates in an embodiment, is held to be mainly determined by the *karma* of the soul that is therein embodied. The quality known as *sattva* is, as you have been told, described as *ishṭa*; that is, it is the quality which is worthy to be acquired and accumulated, while the other two qualities are not so worthy. The reason for this is to be found in the fact that it is only the quality of *sattva* which is helpful in the evolution of wisdom and internal illumination, as also in the progressive achievement of moral non-attachment and selflessness. He, in whom the quality of *sattva* is so preponderant, that the other qualities of *rajas* and *tamas* may well be conceived to be almost absent, may certainly be said to be *nitya-sattvastha*, as such a person is indeed always well established in *sattva*; and when he is so well established in *sattva*, he is naturally as free as possible from the mixed influence of all the three *guṇas*, and is thus *nistraiguṇya*. To be always well established in *sattva* in this manner, one has necessarily to be *nirdvandva*, that is, free from the domination of certain pairs of opposites. The *dvandvas* are such physical and psychological pairs of opposites as are known to have a more or less marked influence in moulding the life and guiding the conduct of men here upon the earth. Heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and desire and aversion are often given as examples of these pairs of opposites; and to be free from their operation and influence necessarily implies freedom from the bondage of the senses, that is, from the common and

natural love of pleasure and the equally common and natural hatred of pain. We have been already told by Śrī-Kṛishṇa that all those pleasures and pains, which the embodied being feels in its embodied state, are not essentially and enduringly related to the soul, but that they are mostly due to the transient and accidental contacts of the soul with its material embodiments. To rise above the *dvandvas* is, therefore, a matter of urgent necessity, if the embodied soul is ever to attain its own natural freedom as well as the supreme bliss of self-realisation.

In the manner in which the man, whose bodily *prakṛiti* is prominently characterised by the quality of *tamas*, is apt to be lazy, stupid and bestial, and the man whose bodily *prakṛiti* is characterised by the quality *rajas* is apt to be energetic, aggressively acquisitive and fond of pleasures and enjoyments to a marked degree, in that same manner the man, who is *nityasattvastha*, naturally lives a life which is, neither by the pleasures nor by the pains of his embodied existence, turned towards any selfish ends or sinful achievements. Śrī-Kṛishṇa makes it clear later on that even the man, who is thus *nityasattvastha*, is not expected to be idle and inactive. His is not a condition of inability to act and to achieve, but a condition in which, while he has to the fullest extent the power to act and to achieve, he does not utilise that power for the accomplishment of selfish ends. The *ishṭatva* or the desirability of the quality of *sattva* is therefore due to its enabling us to live such a straight and steadied life of harmonious action and achievement, as is altogether undisturbed by personal desires and aversions, and is thus completely unpolluted by the taint of selfishness. In the expression *niryōgakshēma* there are two terms which have a special technical significance. The word *yōga* means here अलब्धलाभ or the acquisition of such good things and advantages as have not been yet obtained; and the other word *kshēma* is interpreted to mean लब्धसंरक्षण or the safeguarding of the good that has already been obtained. These words therefore signify ideas very similar to those that are denoted by the English words *progress* and *order*, as used, for instance, in the sciences of sociology and politics. The man who has to be *niryōgakshēma*, that is, regardless of both *yōga* and *kshēma*, ought not to direct his endeavour either to maintain intact the good

things that he has already acquired or to obtain more and more of such good things for himself. He is bound to take all things as they come, without grumbling and without exaltation ; and when he does so, he proves not only that his life is well established in *sattva*, but also that he is *ātmavān*, that is, well capable of being master of himself. There would be nothing in the outside world which could disturb the calm serenity of the mind of the man who has in this manner become master of himself, nothing which could tempt him to move in any direction in which he himself was not freely willing to move. To withstand successfully the allurements of the senses, one must have, as you know, a firm and unconquerable will, holding sovereign sway over the whole of one's life.

यावानर्थ उदपाने सर्वतः संप्लुतोदके ।
तावान् सर्वेषु वेदेषु ब्राह्मणस्य विजानतः ॥ ४६ ॥

46. As much utility (as there is) in a well, which is all around flooded with water, (only) so much (is the utility) in all the Vēdas to a knowing Brāhmaṇa.

In this *ślōka* here, we are given a further estimate of the Vēdic religion of sacrifices. I have already drawn your attention to the fact that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has not proclaimed that the Vēdic religion of sacrifices is utterly wrong and useless. To hold that He says here anything of that sort would be against the whole trend of the teaching given by Him in the *Gītā*. He has upheld in it effectively the *yathākratunyāya* adopted in the Vēdānta, and has declared that every form of worship bestows its own results on the worshipper, and that in relation to all such results there is always something which is ultimately capable of improving more or less the religious capacity and moral tone of him to whom those results accrue. No religion is looked upon by Him to be totally devoid of all moral utility ; and no worshipper is considered to be qualified to adopt a form of religion for which he does not possess the required intellectual and moral fitness. The higher the fitness possessed by a worshipper is, the higher is the form of religion he adopts : and the higher the form of religion that one adopts is, the higher is its utility in evolving the worshipper's moral and spiritual good. If this is understood, there can really be no difficulty in making out the true meaning of this *ślōka*.

About the interpretation of this *ślōka* there is, however, some difference of opinion. Some maintain that Śrī-Krishṇa altogether discards here the Vēdic religion of sacrifices; others hold that He does not do so. How it becomes possible to interpret this *ślōka* in both these ways, we have now to see. Let us suppose that there is a place flooded with water everywhere. In such a place, what may be the special utility of the water in a well? It can have no such special utility; indeed the well is not wanted there at all. If, in the light of this analogy, we interpret this *ślōka*, it would mean that the Vēdic religion of sacrifices is entirely superseded by the Vēdāntic religion of self-realisation. But let us look at the *ślōka* in another way. By what is the utility of any kind of water determined, whether that water be taken out of a flood flowing everywhere or out of a small well? It is determined by the need which those, who use that water, feel for it. Similarly, whether it be the Vēdic religion of sacrifices or the Vēdāntic religion of self-realisation, its utility is determined by the felt religious need of the individual who is in search of a religion to satisfy it. In other words, we are to understand by this that there is an appropriate relation between the condition of the worshipper and the nature of the religion which he adopts. The knowing Brāhmaṇa, therefore, seeks and finds in the Vēdas also the very religion that he actually needs, and for the adoption of which he is really fit. Others, however, seek and find therein what they need and what they are themselves fit for. It must be easy to see that, even according to this way of interpreting this *ślōka*, it is distinctly implied that the Vēdāntic religion of self-culture and self-realisation is superior to the Vēdic religion of sacrifices. The idea generally expressed as अधिकारिभेदे धर्मभेदः has a wide application in Hindu religious thought and life; and the justice of this idea, that the nature of the religion has to vary with the nature of the person who adopts it, may easily be made out by all those who can pay more than a merely superficial attention to the meaning and efficacy of coerced religious conformity. The sacrifice of truth and the destruction of life that have characterised rather freely, the history of medieval Christianity, for instance, in its endeavour to bring about by force a simply nominal conformity in faith and practice, cannot fail to be full of lessons in this respect to all impartial students of history.

There is also another reason why the second interpretation is to be preferred to the first in connection with this *ślōka*; and that reason is dependent on the meaning of the word *Vēda* itself. The meaning which has to be given to this word here is to make it denote merely what is called the *mantra* portion of the Vēdas, although the word has gradually become so expanded in meaning as to include within the sphere of its import the whole body of the earlier as well as later Vēdic literature, consisting of the *Mantras*, the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Āraṇyakas*. There is evidence enough to demonstrate that the term *Vēda* could not have originally denoted all these things, and that at one time the *Mantras* alone must have gone by the name of Vēda. The *Brāhmaṇas* are authoritatively defined to be commentaries on the *Mantras*, and the *Āraṇyakas* do not seem to have been known at all as a part of the Vēdas to the great grammarian Pāṇini. The *Upanishads* are mostly seen to form the concluding portions of the *Āraṇyakas*. Hence in this *ślōka*, as well as in the context preceding it, the word *Vēda* clearly means the authoritative collection of the metrically composed *mantras* used in connection with the performance of Vēdic sacrifices. In the case of the *Yajurvēda*, however, matter other than the metrical *mantras* seems to have been early enough denoted by the word *Vēda*. Moreover, the *Upanishads* are not at all intended to be utilised in any manner in connection with the performance of Vēdic sacrifices; and hence also they cannot be included here in the signification of the word *Vēda*. If, nevertheless, we include them also in its meaning, the statement, that a knowing philosopher derives from all the Vēdas only as much good as any person may derive from a small well, in a place where there is all around an abundance of flowing water, would tend to make the undoubtedly acknowledged higher value of the *Upanishads* fall down to zero. It appears to me that Śri-Kṛishṇa's idea here is to point out that the Vēdāntic religion of self-conquest and self-realisation, as taught in the *Upanishads*, is really superior to the Vēdic religion of ritualism consisting of various complicated ceremonies and sacrifices. Still it is true that the good, which a person may derive from either of them, is not dependent so much upon its intrinsic superiority or inferiority, as upon the felt need and the tested fitness of him who has had to use that particular form of religion as his own. An unfit

and incapable person, even when using a higher form of religion, will succeed in reaping only comparatively lower results. Similarly, a superior worshipper of higher fitness and capacity may well succeed in reaping higher results even from comparatively lower forms of religion. The value of the results, which people generally obtain from adopting any religion, is to be measured, as we are given to understand here, by ascertaining how far those results tend to strengthen virtue and encourage unselfishness in them. Even if selfishness and love of power and of enjoyments happen to be encouraged by what may indeed be a form of religion, still they are sure to hinder the progress of true morality and the growth of internal spiritual strength ; and it is therefore in the very nature of these undesirable qualities to make it increasingly harder and harder for men to obtain the sublime happiness of the serene and ever-lastingly blissful self-realisation and soul-emancipation.

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥ ४७ ॥

47. Your title is only to the work, and never to the fruits (thereof). Let not the fruits of work be your motive (for action), and do you not become attached to inaction.

Now, if the performance of that kind of work, which is in any manner associated with the desire to obtain pleasure and to avoid pain, does not tend to make a man's mind steady, strong and one-pointed, is he, for that reason, to be passively inactive and do no work at all ? No : he cannot safely become attached to inaction in that manner. His title is only to do his allotted work in life, but not to claim, or worry and trouble himself about, the fruits thereof. This injunction to be unmindful of the fruits of one's own work does not certainly mean that one is at liberty to discharge one's duties in an indifferent manner. What it really means is that one ought to discharge one's duties always well, and be at the same time free from the attachment of ownership in relation to all the advantageous results which may accrue from the proper discharge of those duties. To own and to enjoy the fruit of one's own labour ought never to be

the motive impelling one to do one's duty. If so done, the duty is, as you know already, obviously ill done. And yet, on this account, no man may neglect his duties by being idle and inactive. Let us imagine that every individual in a society is capable of feeling and acting in this manner; then, no individual in that society, taken as a whole, will suffer from the enforcement of such a relation between the worker and the fruit of his work. It is only because we are not generally capable of feeling and acting in this manner, that the singularly strong man, who may occasionally feel and act thus, is made to suffer in consequence of the greed and cupidity of his selfish neighbours. Our great familiarity with the institution of property has made us blind to the injustice and moral defectiveness involved in it. If we take into consideration the modern socialistic and other allied movements set on foot in some European countries, and examine the underlying forces, which are responsible for the origin of those movements, we shall find that they have mainly arisen out of the deep dissatisfaction, which people in those countries feel, in having to accept the institution of property, as it is, though it gives more to him who has much, and takes away even the little from him who has only little, and thus prevents the equitable distribution of the produce of men's labour among them according to their natural needs and necessary requirements. To recognise the title of men to the fruit of the work they do, is to allow practically the superfluous accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few clever and capable individuals; and accumulated wealth, in its turn, gives rise to the inequity of compelling the poor and hungry labourer to labour for the advantage of the rich, who usually do not labour and are yet very well fed. In an ideal society, therefore, there should never be any room for this sort of moral danger arising from selfishness being made to serve as the stimulus of work. The man, who works with selfish motives, is rarely satisfied with what he gets, and is ever on the look out to enrich himself more and more even at the expense of others. Śrī-Kṛishṇa's ideal society is, in respect of the ethics of property, conceived to be so constituted that, in it, every person works honestly according to his or her capacity and aptitude, and shares in the common produce of the labour, so put forth, according to his or her natural needs and requirements. That is the reason why He evidently holds that that society is most securely organised, in which

the impulse which makes men work is not that which is caused by selfishness, but is on the other hand that which is roused by the sense of unselfish duty. If therefore all selfishness has to be removed from the many motives which actuate men to do their work in life, it is necessary to declare emphatically that they have no title at all to the fruits of their work. If Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teaching is truly followed in this respect, the strong man's strength will always go to help the weak and to uplift them, but never to make them weaker and more degraded: it will also prevent that highly vicious waste of superfluity, whereby the biting hunger of acute poverty is allowed to remain unappeased at the same time that the great moral depravity of overfed luxury is encouraged to grow without any let or hindrance. The best interests of the strong and the weak can therefore be equally well secured and equally well safeguarded, when the human mind is so disciplined and human society so organised as to make all its members feel, as if instinctively, that their title is only to the work they have to do but not to the fruits thereof. Please observe here how utterly wrong it is to hold, as some do, that the Vēdānta bestows its attention so exclusively on the salvation of the individual as to take no note of the welfare of the corporate life of human communities as a whole. No other than this Vēdāntic ideal of society is capable of cultivating and confirming the sense of human solidarity so well as it can; and in it alone is it possible for us to see, as we shall know by and by, the play of a perfect co-operation and harmony between the life of the individual taken in itself and the life of society taken as a whole.

योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा धनञ्जय ।
सिद्ध्यसिद्ध्योः समो भूत्वा समत्वं योग उच्यते ॥ ४८ ॥
दूरेण ह्यवरं कर्म बुद्धियोगाद्धनञ्जय ।
बुद्धौ शरणमन्विच्छ कृपणाः फलहेतवः ॥ ४९ ॥

48. Becoming fixed in *yōga*, renouncing attachment, and being evenly impartial in relation to (both) success and failure, do (all) your work, O Arjuna: (this) evenness (of mind) is called *yōga*.

49. Work (in itself) is far inferior to the disposition of the mind (with which it is done), O Arjuna! (Therefore) seek refuge in the (appropriate) mental disposition. They are pitiable (creatures), whose motive (for action) is the fruit (of their work).

In one of the previous *ślōkas*, Śrī-Kṛishṇa was seen to be of opinion that the mere performance by Arjuna of his duties in life as a Kshattriya was not in itself enough to enable him to obtain the salvation of the soul. And he was therefore further called upon to become fixed in *yōga* and do his duty without any attachment to the results thereof. The work that people do is judged, not merely by the correctness of the performance of it in all its details, but also by the character of the mind which they bring to bear upon it, and by the nature of the motives which actuate them while they do it. It has to be understood that, in so judging the worthiness of men's work, the work in itself is, as a criterion, far inferior to the motive with which it is performed. The same work, which, if done with an unselfish motive, is helpful in encouraging one's moral progress, is apt to increase the burden of one's *karma*, when it is done with selfish motives. It is therefore that we have all to seek and find our refuge in the motive more than in the work itself. In this connection it will be good for us to note that to enter into and become fixed in *yōga*, that is, to put well into practice through conscious effort the philosophically formulated theory of conduct as given here, one has to renounce all personal and selfish attachment to the results of one's work, and thus manage to become evenly and impartially inclined to both success and failure. Such impartial evenness of mind in relation to success and failure is *yōga*; that is, it is by means of such a mental disposition that the truth of the philosophy of conduct already taught may well be put to the test of experience. It has been pointed out distinctly that, in so far as public good is concerned, it does not very much matter with what motives a man does his work, so long as he does well all that he has to do. But, in so far as that individual himself and his soul-salvation are concerned, he has to do all his duties without any selfish motives actuating him in their doing. The impartial attitude, which

is here enjoined in relation to success and failure, does not certainly imply that we are at liberty to court wanton failure; on the other hand we are bound to do our duties so well as to succeed in them unfailingly. This is made clear in the next *ślōka.*

बुद्धियुक्तो जहातीह उभे सुकृतदुष्कृते ।
तस्माद्योगाय युज्यस्व योगः कर्मसु कौशलम् ॥ ५० ॥

50. He, who is possessed of the (appropriate) disposition, leaves behind both *sukṛita* and *dushkṛita* here. Therefore apply (yourself) to (the practice of) *yōga*: (and) *yōga* is cleverness in (the performance of) works.

The unselfish disposition of the mind which is enjoined here may well be seen to be capable of enabling men to leave behind them both *sukṛita* and *dushkṛita.* These Sanskrit words denote the tendencies which are respectively impressed on men by their good and evil *karmas;* and they generally denote the same things as *puṇya* and *pāpa.* It is held that *sukṛita* arises as the result of good work done with selfish motives; and *dushkṛita* is similarly conceived to be the result of bad work done with, of course, selfish motives. According to the Vēdānta both *sukṛita* and *dushkṛita* are held to lead to the confinement of the soul within the prison-house of matter. It must be evident to you all that the work that men do is often enough judged in itself apart from the motive with which they do it. Their work, so judged, may sometimes be good, and may at other times be bad. For instance, any work, which is truly helpful to others and does them good, may easily be pronounced to be good in itself, whatever happens to be the motive of the man who does that work. Similarly, that kind of work which is harmful to the welfare or to the progress of others, deserves to be judged as being bad in itself. The common Sanskrit epigram—परोपकारः पुण्याय पापाय परपीडनम्—is distinctly in support of this position. We have seen that the word *yōga* as opposed to *sāṅkhya* means in this context the practical discipline by means of which it becomes possible for men to work out well in their own lives that theory of conduct and morality which is expounded in the *Gītā.* In this practical moral

discipline, as explained here, there are two elements, namely, an internal mental element relating to the control of the motive with which we discharge our duties in life, and an external physical element relating to the clever, complete and effective performance of every kind of work that we have to undertake as our duty. It is in recognition of the essential importance of both these component elements in the true practice of virtue, that *yōga* has been explained here to be firstly that kind of mental evenness, which is free from all selfish attachment and is impartial in relation to both success and failure, and secondly to be such cleverness in the performance of work as may ensure the certainty of its appropriate accomplishment. Let us therefore remember that, according to the *Gītā*, duty has to be done both unselfishly and well.

X

Last week we went through that portion of the *Gītā*, wherein, after the explanation of the general excellence of the life of duty, Arjuna was told of its chief value by being taught that devotion to duty has the power of steadying the mind and making it one-pointed. Our devotion to duty has to be entirely for duty's sake, if it is to produce unfailingly all the moral effects that may well be expected of it. If, however, one's devotion to duty happens to be prompted by selfish motives, it cannot have the effect of strengthening the will-power and making the mind one-pointed. It is in this connection that Śrī-Kṛishṇa referred to the religion of sacrifices as known to the *Karmakāṇḍa* of the Vēdas, and gave it out as His opinion that that religion was not absolutely of the highest order. In the last two classes you were led to recognise the fact that Śrī-Kṛishṇa must have distinctly believed in that rule of religion which is now spoken of as the *yathākratunyāya*, according to which the kind of reward which a man reaps from his religion is determined in nature and in quality by the kind of worship which he conducts in faith and in earnestness. Śrī-Kṛishṇa, nevertheless, told Arjuna that the Vēdic worship of sacrifices was not capable of producing the highest good, and accordingly called upon him to follow the higher religion of unselfish duty and self-realisation. This higher religion is free from the operation of the three *guṇas* of *prakṛiti ;* and as it encourages devotion to duty for duty's sake, it is fully

capable of steadying the mind and making it one-pointed. Let us remember here that this kind of devotion to duty for duty's sake necessarily implies such evenness and impartiality of disposition in relation to success and failure as is known by the name of *samatva*, and implies also such cleverness in the performance of work as is always well calculated to lead to its appropriate accomplishment. However, the work in itself is inferior in moral potency to the motive with which it is done. Why it is so is made clear in the following *ślōka* :—

कर्मजं बुद्धियुक्ता हि फलं त्यक्त्वा मनीषिणः ।
जन्मबन्धविनिर्मुक्ताः पदं गच्छन्त्यनामयम् ॥ ५१ ॥

51. Indeed, the wise, who are endued with the (appropriate) mental disposition, give up the fruit that is born of work ; and then, becoming free from the bondage of birth, (they) go to the abode which is free from (all) ailing.

Those wise men, whose mental disposition enables them to become devoted to duty for duty's sake, are here declared to be such as give up the fruit that is born of work. We tried to understand in our last class the meaning of *sukṛita* and *dushkṛita*. The former of these two words literally means anything that is well-done ; and similarly the latter means anything that is ill-done. These words are, as you know, used generally in the sense of the agreeable and disagreeable effects which good and evil deeds respectively produce in us in the form of *samskāras* or internally impressed tendencies. It is these *samskāras* that operate upon the soul so as to determine the nature of its future embodiments in its career of reincarnation. These *samskāras* of *sukṛita* and *dushkṛita* are thus in a special sense the immediate results which are produced by the work we do in our lives. They are purely internal in relation to the worker. But work is also capable of yielding fruit which is external, like the harvested crop, which, for instance, is the fruit of the work of the cultivator of the soil. Since it is the unwholesome attachment to this kind of external fruit, which gives rise to the undesirable internal *samskāras*, both these ought to be given up

by the man who really possesses the wisdom of being devoted to duty for duty's sake. And when he thus gives up the fruit of work and is freed from all the effects of being attached to it—effects which are calculated to impel him to get into further embodiments, he at once becomes fit to be liberated from his imprisonment in matter, that is, to be freed from what may well be called the bondage of birth. Let us clearly bear in mind that our souls become embodied in matter over and over again owing to the operation of our stream of *karma*, that we, in our embodied condition, acquire certain *samskāras* or internally impressed tendencies, which are mainly caused by the feeling of attachment to the fruits of work, and that these internal tendencies, acting like potent body-generating forces, compel our souls to enter again and again into such new embodiments as accord with the nature of those impressed *samskāras*. If we know these things, there can be no difficulty in making out how, when our attachment to the fruits of work is given up, and when we thereafter live our lives so well and so disinterestedly as to be completely incapable of producing the binding *samskāras* of *karma* anew, then our souls will no longer be subjected to the process of birth by reincarnation. Accordingly the idea of the soul being free from the bondage of birth implies necessarily that it has succeeded in realising its own essential nature and also in coming into possession of that heritage of luminous peace and divine blissfulness which is all its own.

यदा ते मोहकलिलं बुद्धिर्व्यतितरिष्यति ।
तदा गन्तासि निर्वेदं श्रोतव्यस्य श्रुतस्य च ॥ ५२ ॥

52. When your intelligence gets beyond the (impassable) confusion of illusion, then you will become disgusted with what is to be heard (as revelation), as also with what has been (already) heard (as such).

The next point that one naturally has to know here is how a man may learn to do his duty for duty's sake, and how it may become possible for him to acquire the *vairāgya* or dispassionate disinterestedness required for the purpose. We are told that such dispassionate disinterestedness becomes possible for us when our

mind gets beyond the common confusion of illusion. In one of the previous *ślōkas*, it was pointed out, as you know, that pleasures and pains are due to the contact of the soul with the matter of its embodiment, and that these pleasures and pains are transient in nature, and therefore do not deserve to be looked upon as constituting the main aim of life. By knowing this well, we get over the "confusion of illusion", and thus come to know that pleasures and pains are not essentially related to the soul, but are simply the products of the body in which it lives. Accordingly, the illusion here referred to is the illusion of mistaking the body for the soul, and of considering thereby that the acquisition of pleasure and the avoidance of pain necessarily constitute the aim of life and of civilization. When one really gets beyond this impassable illusion, one does not naturally care even for the pleasures of paradise. To such a person the bliss of self-realisation is always certain to be more precious than all the alluring pleasures of paradise or *Svarga*, howsoever vividly the scriptures may paint them and promise them unto us.

श्रुतिविप्रतिपन्ना ते यदा स्थास्यति निश्चला ।
समाधावचला बुद्धिस्तदा योगमवाप्स्यसि ॥ ५३ ॥

53. When your firm mind, which has (thus) discarded (Vēdic and other) revealed teaching, is steady in *samādhi*, then you will attain *yōga*.

Please observe that the word *yōga* is here used in association with the word *samādhi*. From this association we may be led to draw the inference that *yōga* in this context means the *ashṭāṅgayōga*, which is explained by Patañjali as consisting of eight consecutive processes in the practice of concentrated meditation, of which *samādhi* is the last. We shall see, as we proceed, that Śrī-Kṛishṇa gradually takes us on to the study and consideration of this *yōga* as the surest means by which aspirants may arrive at self-realisation as well as God-realisation. It appears to me, however, that the word denotes in the context here that other *yōga*, which has already been interpreted in two different ways, namely, as *samatva* or the even disposition of absolute impartiality in relation to success and failure

or pleasure and pain, and as *karma-kauśala* or cleverness in performing well the duties that one has to undertake in life from time to time. These two ways of defining *yōga*, or the practical realisation of the philosophy of conduct, are not inconsistent with each other; on the other hand they together form a consistent whole and enjoin conduct which is both efficient and unselfish. The *yōga* propounded in full by Patañjali, of which the state of extreme mental concentration known as *samādhi* is one of the main parts, may well be looked upon as the *yōga* of *samatva* systematised and scientifically perfected. The killing of selfishness is the immediate moral object which is to be accomplished by means of the increased will-power resulting from the practice of steady mental concentration; its ultimate aim is to win the wisdom and the inner illumination and bliss which arise from self-realisation. Without the killing of selfishness, the performance of duty for its own sake is evidently impossible; and our obligation to kill selfishness completely is dependent upon the self-realisation by which we learn that the soul is essentially different from the body, and that the supreme end of life consists in securing the fulfilment of the enduring destiny of the soul, but not in the acquisition of fleeting comforts and conveniences for the body. Real efficiency and skilfulness in the performance of our duties consists in our positively making sure that we do our duties in life in the manner in which we are called upon to do them, and in the way which is best suited to produce exactly the desired results. We have been taught what that manner is in which we have to perform our duties; that is, we are called upon, while performing them, to be equally and impartially inclined to success and failure as well as to pleasures and pains. The result of doing our duties with this feeling of *samatva* is, as you know, freedom from the bondage of *karma*. Moreover, it is only when we do our duties in life with this feeling of *samatva* that we are able to show real cleverness in their performance; for *samatva* is so well calculated to prevent us from shirking work through the desire to avoid the pain of steady attention and sustained labour. That no duty can be performed well by any one, who is prone to shirk work and is unwilling to labour hard and to be steadily attentive, requires no demonstration. If, after learning that even scripturally ordained deeds aiming at selfish advantage are altogether

inferior to disinterested duty and the bliss of self-realisation, we strive well and make our minds persist in the state of *samādhi* or concentrated attention, we obtain easily the power to perform our duties in life unfailingly, in the manner in which we are called upon to perform them, and so as to produce the duly desired results. The greater the intensity of our mental concentration, the greater is the perfection of the *samādhi* which is achieved by our minds; and the greater the perfection of this *samādhi*, the greater is our capacity to do our duties efficiently and unselfishly. And when our mental *samādhi* is highly perfected, then both self-realisation and God-realisation are easily accomplished. Selfish activities, the motives whereof are determined by pain and pleasure, are incapable of encouraging such mental concentration on our part as will enable us to do our duties efficiently and with absolute disinterestedness. Nor can they bestow on us in the end the blissful illumination of self-realisation and God-realisation.

अर्जुन उवाच—

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।
स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम् ॥ ५४ ॥

Arjuna said :—

54. What is the language (which is descriptive) of him who, being in *samādhi*, is possessed of steady wisdom? What will (such) a person of steady wisdom say? Will he stay? (Or) will he get away?

The man of firm mind and steady wisdom, who is here given the name of *sthitaprajña*, is he whose mind has been made one-pointed through concentration and earnest devotion to unselfish duty. He is to be distinguished from the *Vēdavādarata*—from the person, who is given to discussions about the Vēdas which deal with things that are characterised by the three *guṇas*, and who is of opinion that there is no other good to be aimed at than the power and the enjoyments which are promised by the Vēdic religion of elaborate sacrifices and rituals. Arjuna very naturally wanted to have more information regarding such a seer of steady wisdom,—the seer, who

thus believes more in the great value of the religion of self-realisation than in the power and enjoyments promised by the Vēdic religion of sacrifices. The question as to what he will say is to know what his attitude is apt to be in relation to the life of men and women in society, whether it will be the ordinary attitude of interested endeavour and achievement. Moreover, Arjuna himself wanted, as you are aware, to give up the life of *pravṛitti* and adopt the life of *nivṛitti* instead; and hence naturally arose his desire to know whether Śrī-Kṛishṇa's seer of steady wisdom would stay in society, subjecting himself to its restraints and obligations, or whether he would get away from society and become a *sannyāsin*.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

प्रजहाति यदा कामान् सर्वान् पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥ ५५ ॥

Śrī-Kṛishṇa said:—

55. (A person) is then said to be of steady wisdom, O Arjuna, when he gives up all the desires, which are in his mind, and becomes satisfied in himself with himself.

Observe how stress is laid here on the "desires in the mind". It is a point really worthy of note that, if we compare the potency of those pleasures and pains, which we actually feel in our lives, with the potency of the pleasures and pains, which we simply fancy in our minds and which still form the ground of our hopes and fears, we are sure to make out that the actual pleasures and pains, which we experience in life, are not really quite so powerful in drawing us away from the right path as the fancied hopes and fears, which we are all so apt to cherish freely in our hearts. That is, the *saṅkalpa* of a man leads him more powerfully astray than his *anubhava* is in itself capable of doing. Indeed, man tempts himself very much more than the incidents of his own life and its actual opportunities are all able to tempt him. This is partially due to the fact that there is in nature a certain amount of correspondence between what is pleasing and what is good on the one hand, as well

as between what is painful and what is evil on the other. Like the thing of beauty, goodness also is a joy for ever; and it is in the very nature of wickedness to be painful. Nevertheless, it so happens in life that the ardent search after pleasure often leads a man to ruin, even as the voluntary courting of suffering and pain may well lead him to the attainment of salvation. Therefore we cannot say that this correspondence between pleasure and goodness or between pain and evil is throughout uniform and unfailing. Notwithstanding this, it is owing to this correspondence that our actual experiences in life and the feelings of pain and pleasure associated with them do not propel us into the wrong path quite so powerfully as the desires and fancies which we cherish in our own minds do. Truly, whatever is good is pleasing and whatever is bad is painful; but we cannot say equally truly that whatever is pleasing is good, and that whatever is painful is bad. Moreover, the force of fancy to create selfishness has to be recognized as a thing which is much stronger than the force that is possessed by the actualities of life itself. In life there are innumerable correctives of selfishness; but in the abstract world of free fancy and imaginative ambition there generally is and need be no corrective at all. That the mind should always be well guarded from the corrosion of selfishness, is a lesson which no true lover of righteousness can ever afford to ignore. If all the desires in the mind are given up, and a man has nothing to cherish in it as a desirable object of personal attainment, does his mind become thereby wholly aimless and vacant? Those, who do not know what it is to live without what is here called *manō-gata-kāma*, put this question very naturally. Moralists, who hold that there must be egoistic motives behind all actions, and that motiveless or genuinely disinterested actions are absolutely impossible, may well be of the opinion that, when the mind is freed from all desires, it necessarily becomes aimless and ethically vacant. Śrī-Kṛishṇa has warned us against such a view, and told us that His seer of steady wisdom becomes, after renouncing all the desires in the mind, *ātmanyēvātmanā tushṭah*—satisfied in his own heart with himself. This feeling of internal satisfaction is considered to be a noble and happy experience in itself. It is, morever, helpful to self-realisation and to the absolutely unselfish devotion to duty. No vacant and aimless mind can give rise to these results. When a

soul becomes the object of its own experience, it cannot be said that that experience is empty and objectless; nor can we say that such an experience has no bearing on the determination of what ought to be the true moral purpose of life. When we know that the soul is in that state still conscious, the idea, that our mind is apt to be vacant and aimless, if it be without the external association of sensations and the experience of pain and pleasure,—such an idea has then to be inevitably abandoned. The stimulation due to the various objects and forces of nature operates of course even upon the person who is in the state of *samādhi*; and yet it produces no effect upon his in-turned and highly concentrated mind. He is, as it were, dead to it, owing to the irresponsiveness of his internally concentrated mind. If, when he is so dead to all external stimulation, he is still internally conscious of himself and experiences an indescribably calm and blissful feeling, then it surely cannot be true that the mind is wholly made up of sensations and their effects only. Undetermined by sensations, there is the essential life of the soul itself. Hence it cannot be hard for us to see that, when the moral aim of our lives is brought into intimate relation with this essential life of the soul itself, such motives as are determined by pain and pleasure can have no serious ethical value at all. I have already told you that the practice of *yōga*, as expounded by Patañjali, is a kind of psychological experiment intended to test the reality of the soul, as against the view that there is no such thing at all as the soul, and that there is nothing more in the make-up of our mind than our fleeting sensations and their results. It is the case with all introspective psychological experiments that it cannot be possible for others to learn as much from the experiment of the experimenter, as the experimenter himself is able to learn therefrom. If we want to realise directly the results of his experiment, we can do so only by performing that experiment ourselves quite as successfully as he has done. We have, however, to bear in mind that, when the reality of the soul becomes experimentally demonstrable even to the satisfaction of one man, its proof is really rendered strong enough to arrest the attention of all thoughtful persons, and cannot thereafter be lightly ignored. Patañjali has described for us in full detail the various processes connected with the practice of *yōga*. They may well be subjected by others to the test of logical analysis as well as

of direct personal experimentation. If, when so tested, those processes are found not to break down, there can be nothing strange or unintelligible in the statement that, in the state of self-realisation experienced through *yōga-samādhi*, the *yōgin* is in himself satisfied with himself. In the case of such a man the pleasures and pains of the material world will be of no account in determining the motives of his moral life. He can never become a low moral cooly for whom duty is after all nothing more than a mere means for the earning of wages and the winning of pleasure and power. His life is sure to be more highly purposeful, inasmuch as his ceasing to work for pay necessarily implies his willing readiness to work for love. Therefore true self-realisation can never lead to anything like apathy or absolute self-centration. On the other hand, it is sure to encourage the life of service and self-sacrifice. Śrī-Kṛishṇa's seer of steady wisdom has, accordingly, to be unmindful of his own pains and pleasures in working out the life of unselfish duty, but he cannot ignore the pains and pleasures of others, seeing that he has so to live his life of duty as to make it identical with the life of loving service. These things will become clearer to us as we learn more and more fully the characteristics of the true *sthitaprajña*.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥ ५६ ॥

56. He, whose mind does not become distressed when in misery, whose desire for happiness has departed, and from whom (all) longing, fear and anger have passed away—(he) is said to be the seer of steady wisdom.

The ancient psychology of the Hindus, of the Buddhists and also of the Jains may be seen to agree in maintaining that sensations give rise to pleasure and pain, and that these feelings give rise in their turn to *rāga*, *bhaya* and *krōdha*, that is, to longing, fear and anger. Moreover, it is understood here that, unless external objects operate upon the mind through the senses, we can have no sensations. In ordinary life, we all have a large number of sensations of various kinds. And whenever external stimuli produce sensations in us, we usually find that some of them are pleasant and that

others are painful. After experiencing such pleasant and painful sensations, our natural tendency is to become more and more inclined to seek the pleasant sensations and to avoid the painful ones. The longing for pleasure necessarily carries with it the feeling of aversion in relation to pain; that is, *rāga* implies *dvēsha* also. When we cultivate our will-power and make it strong enough to withstand the distracting temptations of pleasure and pain, so that we thereby become free from longings and aversions, only then does it become possible for us to possess the steady wisdom and the firm mind, which are the characteristics of a true seer. He, who has not subdued the natural tendency to feel dejected and sorrowful in misery, and to feel elated and joyous in happiness,—such a man cannot curb the desire to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. *Bhaya* is fear; when we seek pleasure, and the chances are either that the desired pleasure cannot be had or that pain is apt to be caused, or again when we wish to avoid pain, and the chances are that the undesired pain cannot be avoided, then we become prone to be agitated by the feeling of fear. The man, who is impartial even in his own personal appreciation of pleasure and pain, can never become subject to fear or to disappointment. His career in life is bound to be imperturbable, and it is impossible for him to find an object with which he may well become angry. Accordingly, we may completely exhaust the force of desire and aversion in our hearts by killing our sensitive abhorrence of pain and our fond relish for pleasure; and when desire and aversion are so exhausted, both fear and anger are sure to be starved to death. Is it any wonder that, in the resulting calm of such an absolute dispassion, the serene mind of the seer becomes possessed of steady wisdom?

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ५७ ॥

57. He, who has, in relation to all (things in the world) no affectionate attachment (of any kind), and who, on coming by such things as good fortune and evil fortune, does not feel glad (or) become affected

with disgust (in regard to them),—his wisdom is well established.

This *ślōka* also, like the previous one, gives us a description of the seer of steady wisdom; and it is worthy of note that stress is laid here more upon the working of the will as affected by pleasure and pain than upon the mere sensations. The idea seems to be that, unless the commanding power of the will from within succeeds in counteracting well the tempting tendencies of pleasurable and painful sensations, one cannot become a seer of steady wisdom. Therefore to weaken the physiological power of the senses ought certainly not to be the main aim of the aspirant. The mere weakening of the normal physiological power of the senses through starvation can never give rise to any increase in the strength of one's will-power. It is as true in psychology as it is in physics that the energy which is put forth in work is generally measured by the resistance which it overcomes, other things being equal. To weaken the power of the senses by forcibly deadening them more or less to sensations is nothing other than weakening the resistance which the will has to overcome; and this process is surely not calculated to make the will strong, seeing that even here, as elsewhere, the weakening of the resistance to be overcome is apt to cause the overcoming energy also to be weak. Therefore what is really required of the aspirant is that he should endeavour to free himself from all such internal attachment to things as is prompted by likes and dislikes. In fact he has to make his senses subordinate to his will, and ought not to allow his will to be the slave of his senses. Otherwise, his effort in the direction of the culture of unselfishness is sure to end in failure. However, it is a part of our human constitution that, with us, habit soon becomes second nature. Thus even coerced unselfishness and dispassion are apt to become spontaneous in due course of time. And it is to this that we owe the disciplinary value of voluntarily enforced sense-control as the means of acquiring the power of spontaneous self-control.

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ५८ ॥

58. When he withdraws (his) senses everywhere from the objects of the senses, in the manner in which the tortoise (draws in its) limbs (into itself), his wisdom (becomes) well established.

After thus giving a general description of the seer of steady wisdom, Śrī-Kṛishṇa naturally took up for consideration the next question of how a man may well manage to obtain sure possession of such steady wisdom. What is required for this purpose is the duly directed exercise of will-power. Ordinarily, when external objects are perceived by the senses, the pleasures and pains resulting from the sensations give rise to the tendencies of desire and aversion in us. We very naturally desire to have more and more of such experiences as are pleasant and agreeable, and become more and more averse to those other experiences which are painful and disagreeable. Moreover, it is in the very nature of our senses that they project themselves, so to say, into the outer world so as to come into relation with all the various perceivable objects that are found therein. Or, it may be said that the external world is ever prone to operate upon our senses, which are so fashioned as always to cause the expansion of the sphere of our conscious cognition from within outwards. One result of this is that, if the sensibility of our senses is normal and unimpaired, it is hard for most of us to resist the tendencies of desire and aversion, which are respectively caused by pleasure and by pain. However, through the practice of mental concentration and the exercise of steady will-power, we may not only prevent the common outward play of the senses in search of the objects of the external world, but also make the very perceptive power of our senses operate inwards so as to give rise to what may be called the introspective cognition of the self by the self. It must be within the experience of most of us that, when the mind is, with highly concentrated attention, engaged in any kind of absorbing study or thought or meditation, we fail to see with open eyes even the nearest and the most prominent objects, and fail to hear with unimpeded ears sounds which we could not but have heard under other circumstances. Therefore, even this tendency of the senses to stretch themselves out, as it were, to come into relation

with external objects, to perceive them and thereby give rise to the feelings of pleasure and pain, is capable of being effectively controlled by the will from within. That being so, it is very necessary for us to cultivate this power of consciously withdrawing the senses into ourselves, if we earnestly desire to obtain the steady wisdom of the true philosopher. Indeed this is the very first thing which we have to accomplish in the endeavour to achieve that self-realisation, whereby alone one's wisdom can after all become truly well established.

विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥ ५९ ॥

59. In the case of the embodied soul, which is deprived of the (food of sensations), the objects of the senses turn away (from it), leaving the relish (for them to remain) behind. On beholding that, which transcends (them), even (this) relish of that (soul) disappears.

We see from this *ślōka* that Arjuna was called upon to know that to be merely incapable of sensing external objects, and thereby to be incapable of experiencing pleasures and pains, is in itself not enough to enable one to become the possessor of steady wisdom. In the case of the man, whose senses have been weakened through starvation, what we observe is that he has simply lost the capacity to sense outside objects and that he therefore does not perceive them. In the case of the *yōgin*, however, we know that he is quite capable of sensing them well, and still does not do so on account of his will-power being effectively directed against such a course. Which of these two men is the stronger morally, and deserves to be called the seer of steady wisdom? Certainly the *yōgin*. His mind is altogether on a higher plane of power than that of the man of the starved senses. The mind of the mere sense-starver is characterised by incapacity, while the mind of the seer of steady wisdom is certain to be highly capable and potent. By merely depriving the mind of its food of sensations, we do not necessarily make it strong enough to overcome the tempting tendencies of pleasures and pains. Even when such a psychological privation of sensations is effectively carried out

by the stubborn aspirant, his internal relish for the enjoyable objects of the senses need not thereby come to an end. Relish can be counteracted generally by relish. In the case of all progressive aspirants the morally lower relish is counteracted by the morally higher one, while in the case of retrogressive weaklings the higher relish either does not exist at all, or is only too well counteracted by the lower one. Indeed the weakness of the moral weakling consists in the greater strength of his morally lower relish for the pleasing objects of mere sense-enjoyment. Therefore, even after successfully withdrawing the senses from the objects which they are prone to perceive, the aspirant has to clear his mind of all the old-instilled relish for the outer objects of sense-enjoyment. This becomes possible when the in-turned power of the senses enables him to perceive his own self. The supreme attractiveness of this introspective perception of the self comes out from the fact that the blissful delight, which it affords, is declared to be so very much more worthy of enjoyment than the delight which is due to the pleasures of the senses. Indeed this latter delight can have no recognisable value at all in the presence of the former. Since even the most perfect privation of pleasures cannot bestow the blessing of intrinsic purity on a heart, which is full of passion, it is impossible for the aspirant to succeed in his endeavour to obtain the wisdom that is well established, unless and until he succeeds in winning that serene bliss of internal satisfaction which is based on self-realisation. Thus the withdrawing of the senses from their objects of perception is no more than the first step in the discipline of self-control, by means of which the aspirant is to become the possessor of steady and well established wisdom. Hence it can never be an end in itself. Such practice of self-control is only a means for the attainment of the end of self-knowledge. And when self-knowledge is attained through it, the wisdom of the aspirant becomes naturally steady and well established. Our difficulty, however, is so great even in connection with the adoption of this preliminary discipline of self-control, that most of us are apt to break down in the very endeavour to withdraw the senses from their objects of perception. How difficult it is for us to obtain this requisite mastery over our senses, we shall try to understand in our next class.

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Last time we were going on with the teaching of Śrī-Kṛishṇa in regard to the *sthitaprajña*, or the seer of steady wisdom, whose mind does not shake even under the strongest of temptations. To the question which Arjuna put, as to what kind of man such a seer would be, Śrī-Kṛishṇa gave His reply by first pointing out to him how the wise man of that description had to be one who could overcome all the desires in his heart and could easily withdraw his senses away from the objects which they would otherwise ordinarily perceive and enjoy. And then, to show that the mere incapacity, through forced outward hindrance, to perceive and enjoy the objects of the senses does not mean the possession of such steady wisdom, He gave Arjuna to understand that, in the case of the man, whose senses are in some manner or other made merely incapable of enjoying their objects, while the mind within is full of keen hankerings after them, there is no possibility of his ever acquiring the steady wisdom of the seer, till all those inner hankerings are quite completely killed. In the case of such a man, it is not the conquest of the senses by the power of the duly disciplined will that we observe; but what we may notice there is simply the incapacity of the senses to perceive their objects so as to be well aware of them. It is, therefore, only he, who, by the power of his disciplined and cultured will, subdues the senses, that deserves to be called the seer of steady wisdom; for he has succeeded in experiencing the peace and the blissfulness of that higher mental life, in which the temptations of the senses are all vanquished by the power of the will which is guided by the luminous inspiration resulting from self-realisation. Many of us know very well how true it is that to kill the inner relish for pleasure is much more difficult than to withdraw the senses by force from pleasurable objects of perception. But even this work of withdrawing the senses is not, as Arjuna was taught, capable of being easily accomplished, notwithstanding the fact that, without its accomplishment, the higher achievement of self-realisation is altogether impossible. Our self-conquest ultimately rests on our conquest of the senses from within. And how very difficult of accomplishment such sense-conquest is, we are told in the *ślōka* with which we begin our work to-day.

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरुषस्य विपश्चितः ।
इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ॥ ६० ॥

60. Even in the case of the wise man, who is putting forth effort (to subdue them), the senses are, O Arjuna, impetuous, and carry away the mind by force.

It is found that even in the case of a wise and learned man, who is constantly endeavouring to subdue his senses, they are too powerful to be easily subdued by him. If it is seen that they compel even such a man to move in the direction in which sensual pleasures and enjoyments lie, it cannot be difficult for us to make out how very much more powerful they are apt to be in the case of weaker and less wise men, whose endeavour to control them is often known to prove futile for want of steady perseverance on their part. That so many of us so often know the better and do the worse is very largely due to this uncontrollable sway which our senses exercise over us in spite of ourselves. With pleasure as the aim of conduct, it is impossible to kill selfishness; and with selfishness unkilled, it is impossible for us to do the better even as we may happen to know the better.

तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ६१ ॥

61. Having subdued them all, one should be engaged in meditation, with Me as the supreme object (thereof). For, he, who has the senses under control, his wisdom is well established.

Therefore he, who is desirous of becoming a person possessed of steady wisdom, should keep his strong and over-powering senses completely under control. The most appropriate and effective means, with the help of which men may succeed in this decidedly hard work of subduing their senses, is here shewn to consist in making the mind become intensely absorbed in meditating upon God as the supreme object of devotion and attainment. It is only such meditation, which, by giving rise to the ineffable bliss of

self-realisation and God-realisation, can destroy altogether man's inner relish for the pleasures of the senses; and we know how, without the destruction of that relish, man can progress neither morally nor spiritually, whatever may be the course of practical religious discipline that he adopts. When the object of man's meditation happens to be other than God, and when his mind comes to be actively engaged in coveting the various pleasures of the senses, the result is bound to be inevitable moral decay. Therefore it has always to be borne in mind that it is not every kind of meditation and mental concentration which can lead to true self-conquest. That meditation, the object of which is nothing other than God, is alone capable of producing well the great strength which is needed for self-conquest. All other kinds of meditation, the objects whereof are ultimately no other than the pleasing objects of the senses, are not only not productive of this strength, but are also productive of much moral deterioration. How this happens is clearly explained in the two *ślōkas* that follow:

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात्सञ्जायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥ ६२ ॥

क्रोधाद्भवति सम्मोहः सम्मोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥ ६३ ॥

62. In the case of the man, who keeps meditating on the objects of the senses, there arises an attachment in relation to those (objects). From attachment desire is born, and from desire anger is born.

63. From anger comes bewilderment; from bewilderment, confusion of memory; from failure of memory (comes) loss of intelligence; and from loss of intelligence one becomes completely ruined.

Here, in these *ślōkas*, we are given an explanation of how it is that, if we retain the internal relish for the pleasures of the senses to any degree, we are sure to go down morally step by step. In

the case of the man who keeps constantly thinking of, and meditating upon, the pleasurable objects of the senses, what we notice is that his mind only too naturally becomes attached to what it thinks of and is meditating upon. Equally naturally this attachment makes the mind desire that to which it has become so attached. That we become attached to what we cherish in our hearts is no less true, than that we wish to enjoy all such pleasurable objects of the senses as generally happen to command our fond attachment. Accordingly, first comes attachment, and then comes desire. Thereafter, desire gives rise to anger. How this is so, we may easily see, if we bear in mind that anger is invariably the result of disappointment caused by the non-fulfilment of a cherished desire. If we are foiled in our attempt to attain any object that we desire, we become as a rule so dissatisfied with what happens to be the cause of our discomfiture as to have our wrath excited against it. The stronger our attachment is to an object of pleasure or of enjoyment, the greater surely is our desire to obtain it. The more intense such desire is in us, the keener is our sense of disappointment at its non-fulfilment. And the keener this sense of disappointment, the more violently do we become convulsed with anger. Hence none of us can deny in the light of our experience that desire is in reality the unpropitious parent of anger.

It must be, I believe, well known to all of you that anger is sometimes defined very rightly as a short madness. This means that, when we are angry, our mind loses, for the time being, its rationality altogether. There can indeed be no doubt that anger gives rise to loss of intelligence, and deprives us for the time being of our power of reasoning. In the madness of anger, the mind becomes so full of confusion and bewilderment, that it loses notably the strength as well as the clearness of its faculty of memory. Hence, what the angry man does in his fit of anger, he can rarely remember. The excitement of anger is accordingly incompatible with the fitness of the mind to receive impressions, and to have them so recorded within that they may be easily revived by the conscious exercise of memory. In addition to making the mind unimpressionable in this manner, anger takes away from men their power of mental concentration and steady attention; and without this

power it is very hard to recall into open recognition any of the impressions that are stamped on the memory. If a man becomes mad, almost all the impressions of his past life are somehow disorganised in his mind, owing to the disturbance caused in it by his madness. And knowing, as most of us do, that there is so much truth in the statement that anger is a short madness, we cannot fail to make out how a man is certainly apt to lose his memory, if he freely and frequently gives way to anger.

The loss of memory, which is so brought about, leads to the destruction of intelligence. To such of us as know the psychological functioning of intelligence, it cannot be difficult to make out how this loss of memory will necessarily lead to the destruction of intelligence. Intelligence, as you know, represents our power of comparing and contrasting the impressions which the various phenomena of the external world leave upon our mind in the form of percepts and concepts, so that we may understand by means of such comparison and contrast what things are similar and what dissimilar, and what those characteristics are in relation to which similar things are similar and dissimilar things dissimilar. Corresponding to every object of perception that is perceived, there is generally an inner mental conception; and the work of the intelligence is to compare the various mental conceptions so produced, so as to ascertain the similarity and the dissimilarity that are found in relation to them. If we understand well the nature of the process of mental conception and its relation to memory, then how loss of memory gives rise to the destruction of intelligence becomes clear at once. In Sanskrit psychology this process of conceiving things in the mind and the process of stamping impressions on the memory are both spoken of as *saṃskāras*. The idea here is, that, when we perceive an object, the impression which that act of perception leaves upon the mind, so as to enable us to have a conception of the thing which we have perceived, is the same as, or at least very much like, the impression with the help of which we are enabled to remember our past experiences. In this way it is evident that what we have as the basis of both knowledge and memory is an internal mental impression; and this it is which goes by the name of *saṃskāra*. The *saṃskāra*, which forms the basis of knowledge,

is called *bhāvanā* ; and that, which forms the basis of memory, is called *smṛiti*. It is worth noting that these words *bhāvanā* and *smṛiti* denote also 'conception' and 'memory' respectively. And the common fact of human experience, that ideas and impressions on the memory become, under certain favourable circumstances, actualised into what is much like direct perceptual knowledge, is clearly in favour of this view that the conscious conceptual impression on the mind is not essentially different from the subconscious impression on the memory. Without memory and without conceptual ideas, the mind has necessarily to be very nearly empty. In their absence there will then be nothing in it for the intelligence to work upon. Therefore when memory goes, the intelligence is sure to be starved to death; and with its death will disappear our rationality and our power to distinguish right from wrong. And will this not lead to the ruin of the higher destiny of the individual who is so affected? The whole thing is thus a consecutive and consistent psychological chain, in which every link is complete and in perfect position. In this psychological exposition of the ruin, which assuredly follows in the wake of a person's attachment to the pleasures of the senses, we see what great power for good as well as for evil is really wielded by the will. When the will is trained to have mastery over the senses, our sensations and the pleasures and pains which are associated with them can do us no harm at all. Their power to prove hurtful lasts only so long as they manage to hold the will in subjection to them. This is brought out thus in this next *ślōka* ;—

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥ ६४ ॥

64. But one, who, being possessed of a duly disciplined self, perceives sense-objects by means of the senses, which are under one's control and are free from (inducing) desire and aversion,—(such an one) obtains freedom from distraction.

In this *ślōka* we are taught another important lesson relating to the ethical discipline that we, as human beings, are called upon

to undergo in life. We have been already told that merely to starve the senses, so as to physically incapacitate them to perceive and enjoy such objects as they may find to be pleasurable, is not to undergo well that psychological discipline which is so essential for the building up of a worthy moral life. To go through such a discipline successfully, we have to be in possession of a really strong will. Our conquest of the senses must for this purpose be the result of a voluntarily conscious, sustained and well-directed mental effort on our part. Otherwise, their power to distract the mind is sure to continue unabated. Weakening the power of the senses by the use of outer force may, for the time being, make the inevitable association between the senses and their respective objects of perception free from direct and immediate moral harm. But such a weakening cannot kill the inner longing for the enjoyment of the pleasures of the senses. The centre, from which the moral pollution of our mind is propagated, is within the mind itself. Its purity is certainly never endangered so much by what is put into it through the senses, as by its own weakness to withstand the tempting allurement of the sense-objects which it perceives through them. To run away from temptations is better than to be actually ruined through yielding unto them. But resolutely to resist temptations and to overcome them is even more decidedly better than to run away from them. Surely, he who never fights a battle can never be a hero. He, who wishes to become a hero, must therefore fight his battles valiantly, and thus show that he is made of true mettle. Hence, even in the matter of acquiring moral strength and displaying moral heroism, it will not do for us to run away from the battle-field of temptations. He who perceives and enjoys the objects of the senses by means of the senses, which are successfully kept under restraint, so that they do not give rise to the impulses of desire and aversion—the senses which are thus fully under his own control and guidance—he deserves to be called *vidheyātman*, inasmuch as he thereby shows himself to be easily amenable to proper internal discipline and sustained self-control. He acquires what is spoken of here as *prasāda*, as the direct result of such sense-restraint and self-control. This word generally means clearness; and here it is used to signify freedom from all such distractions as tend to make the mind excited and unsteady so as thereby to compel it to lose its clearness. The idea is

that there is really no harm in allowing our senses to come into contact with the pleasurable objects which they have perceived: the harm is not in feeling the pleasures and the pains which arise in consequence of such perception, but it is really due to the *vikshēpa* or distraction which is caused by the desires and aversions arising from sensations as well as from the pleasures and the pains that are associated with them. It is surely not impossible for us harmlessly to perceive the external objects of perception with the help of our senses, and enjoy the pleasures resulting from such a perception, provided we take care not to allow our minds to become distracted by the ordinarily resulting impulses of desire and aversion. That, ordinarily, sensations and the feelings of pleasure and pain, which are in association with them, tend to distract the mind, so as to make it hard for it to become one-pointed, is very clearly demonstrated by Patañjali in his *Yōga-sutras*. The very word *vikshēpa* is used by him to denote such mental distraction; and he has distinctly recognized that pleasure and pain, as the determiners of desire and aversion, are among the notable causes of such distraction. If pleasures and pains do not distract our minds, even when they are actually experienced, they surely can do us no harm. It so happens that there are occasions in our life, when we feel that the control of our own conduct has been beyond our power. If, on such occasions, we try to analyse psychologically our own mental condition and make out what it is that has in that manner made it impossible for us to control our own conduct, we very often cannot but come to this conclusion, namely, that we have not been able to keep our senses so completely under our control as to deprive them of their power to distract our mind. The acquisition of such conscious and internally enforced control over the senses is, therefore, absolutely necessary for all of us, if we wish to succeed in any marked manner in conducting our lives aright.

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठति ॥ ६५ ॥

65. On (his thus acquiring) mental clarification, there arises the removal of all his misery (from him). (And) in the case of him, whose mind is cleared

(of distractions), the intelligence soon becomes firmly established.

When the mind of a man becomes clarified and free from all tempting and misguiding distractions, then all his miseries will naturally and of themselves disappear. In fact, misery, sorrow and distress are all due to the distractions which the tempting tendencies of pleasure and pain cause in us; and when these are overcome and our control over the senses is securely established, then all our miseries very naturally disappear. Such freedom from distraction and from mental unhappiness has the further effect of strengthening the intelligence, so as to enable it to do well its work of knowing and discriminating as well as of thinking and reasoning. Mental distraction is in itself enough to make the light of intelligence dim and unsteady; and when such distraction becomes associated with the unhappiness, which it is apt to give rise to, then the dim and flickering light of our intelligence is sure to make our vision of truth very unreal and highly distorted. That distractions give rise to unhappiness is as well within the range of human experience, as that they produce in us many of our prejudices and predilections. Who is there among us that does not know that our prejudices and predilections so often lead us to see things otherwise than as they really are? If we wish to see things as they are, it is very necessary for us to remove all prejudices and other kinds of pre-dispositions from our minds. And when the mind is freed from all bias, then our intelligence becomes a strong and worthy instrument placed at our disposal to enable us to know the truth as it really is. That the distracted mind cannot be clear and cannot apprehend truth in all its glory of unsullied purity, is so evident to human experience that it indeed stands in no need of any explanation or demonstration.

नास्ति बुद्धिरयुक्तस्य न चायुक्तस्य भावना ।
न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ॥ ६६ ॥

66. There is no intelligence to him who is of unconcentrated attention, nor is there (any) conceptual ideation in the case of (such) a person of unconcentrated

attention. And there is no peace to him who does not ideate. Whence (will) happiness (come) unto him who is wanting in peace?

We were told in the previous *ślōka* that the intelligence of him, who is *prasanna-chētas*, that is, of clear undistracted mind, is capable of becoming steady and strong; and in this *ślōka* we are told that distraction not only weakens the intelligence and causes it to waver, but also takes away from man his power of ideation and continued meditation. According to Patañjali, *vikshēpa* or mental distraction can be counteracted by what he calls *ēkatattvābhyāsa* or the continued meditation of some one thought, idea or experience. He who thus concentrates his attention on one idea, or thought, or experience is *yōga-yukta*; and hence he who is of unconcentrated attention is *ayukta*. In the case of such an *ayukta*, the mind is apt to be distracted, and his distraction is certain to undermine his intelligence. In the manner in which the faculty of intelligence suffers through distraction, the faculty of imagination also is apt to be injured through it. And for the acquisition of mental tranquillity and internal peace, four different kinds of *bhāvanās* have been prescribed and practised from very ancient days in this country. They are called *maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *mudita* and *upēkshā*. The first of these means friendly satisfaction; the second, merciful sympathy; the third, joyous appreciation; and the fourth, conscious indifference. To make the will direct our faculty of ideation or imagination so as to enable it to determine our mental attitude to be one of friendly satisfaction towards those who are happy and prosperous, one of kindly sympathy towards those who are unhappy and miserable, one of joyous appreciation towards those who are good and worthy, and one of conscious indifference towards those who are bad and unworthy—to do this continuously is to practise the *bhāvanās*. That our attitude towards our surroundings determines the internal peacefulness or otherwise of our minds really requires no demonstration. Who among us does not know that the mind is its own place and can make a heaven of hell or a hell of heaven? It is by the exercise of his faculty of imagination that man succeeds in making a heaven of hell or a hell of heaven; and the practice of

the *bhāvanās* is thus intended to ensure that he more generally makes a heaven of hell than a hell of heaven. That we often become in reality what we earnestly and seriously imagine ourselves to be, is an undeniable fact of human nature ; and on it depends to no small degree our mental peacefulness and our true and imperturbable happiness.

If a man, therefore, has not got this power of *bhāvanā*, it is not possible for him to obtain the *śānti* or that blissful peace of mind, which is indeed the noble mother of all true happiness. Surely, without the acquisition of such peace of mind, as will in no case allow us to be disturbed either by the pleasurable or by the painful sensations, which our constant contact with the external world produces in us, none of us can have any *sukha* or real happiness. The word *sukha* may, as indicated by more than one context, mean either pleasure or happiness. Modern English writers on ethics are also known to make a distinction between pleasure and happiness. Although there are some among them who maintain that ultimately they are both the same, still the idea of pleasure is very generally recognised to be different from the idea of happiness. The *sukha*, which a man acquires through his established peace of mind, is not the same as the fleeting *sukha* which the pleasurable objects of the senses produce in him on their being perceived. The former of these is not a mere animal feeling like the latter ; it is on the other hand the happiness of the blissfully peaceful mind, which, while taking in every impression and experience that the external world may produce, is not in any manner disturbed by the pleasures and pains arising from the sensations of the senses, and does not allow itself to be carried away by either of the impulses of desire and aversion consequent upon those sensations. So long as we believe that this supreme happiness, born out of such blissful peace, is a thing that is really worthy to be sought and won, it clearly becomes our duty to so conduct our lives as to be able to attain that happiness with an unfailing certainty. For this purpose we have to make our minds free from the distraction of desires and aversions by the adequate practice of appropriate meditation and mental concentration. Success in the endeavour to concentrate our attention steadily, strengthens naturally our intellectual faculty, and thereby improves our power to know and to conceive and to imagine. Simultaneously

with the improvement in the power of the intelligence, there also arises very naturally the increased efficiency of the faculty of imagination. Thus mental concentration is helpful to the improvement of the intelligence as well as of the imagination; and when our improved imagination is appropriately exercised so as to give to our minds a harmonious attunement in relation to all our surroundings, then nothing can have the power to worry or to annoy or to excite us and thus deprive us of our peace of mind. When we are in command of such imperturbable peace, and duly appreciate its blissfulness, then our true happiness becomes well-founded and enduring. A life of steady thought, strenuous action and unselfish achievement, when freed thus from all possible disappointment, is sure to be abundantly full of what cannot but be true and lasting happiness. No happiness of any other kind can be true or worthy or unchanging like it.

इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवांभसि ॥ ६७ ॥

67. For, in his case, that mind (of his), which works in obedience to the roving senses, carries away (all) wisdom, as a (stormy) gale (carries away) a ship in water.

Here we are told why it is that he, who is wanting in peace cannot have true happiness. His want of peace indicates that his mind is not free from distraction; and this means that his roving senses are still masterful and sway the mind as they like. Any person who is so situated is naturally apt to confound pleasure with happiness; and it is rightly conceived that there can be no greater unwisdom than to give room to this confusion. How can he, whose wisdom is so far gone as to make it impossible for him to distinguish between pleasure and happiness, be really happy at all? Pleasure is transient, and becomes easily changed into pain; or, it gives rise to pain, often as a necessary result. To mistake it to be the happiness that is real and enduring is indeed very great unwisdom. This unwisdom, which so undermines men's happiness, is indeed inevitable, so long as they place themselves at the disposal of their unsteady

senses. Although the senses are in reality as powerful as a storm, they have to be subjugated by persistent endeavour and strong will-power. Otherwise, one can never hope to become the 'seer of steady wisdom'.

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ॥ ६८ ॥

68. Therefore, O mighty-armed (Arjuna), he, whose senses are on all sides held back from the objects of the senses,—his wisdom is well established.

We have been already told how the senses are ordinarily so powerful and tumultuous that they are apt to bear away by force the mind of even a wise man who is wide awake. We have now learnt the nature of the commonly current relation between sensation and volition. Indeed the powerfulness of the senses in shaping our lives and in determining our aims and aspirations is due to the influence which our sensations very generally wield over our will. To keep the will free from the control of the senses is what we know as *indriya-jaya* or sense-conquest; and such sense-conquest may well be taken to be almost the same as self-conquest, even as it is mentioned by implication in this *ślōka*. He, who cannot hold back his senses from their objects, can never hope to become the 'seer of steady wisdom'; and he, who indeed can and does successfully hold his senses back from their enjoyable objects, is as a matter of course led on to become sooner or later such a wise seer. I hope you will not consider it redundant, if I draw your attention once again to the fact, that this holding back of the senses from their objects is not the same as enfeebling and incapacitating them through forced starvation, so as to make it impossible for them to perceive things and to become consciously cognisant of what they perceive. Such a starvation of the senses cannot give rise to genuine dispassion within the heart. Unless the heart-lodged relish for the pleasures of the senses is completely dislodged, men can achieve neither sense-conquest nor self-conquest. Therefore, all those, who desire to become blessed with steady wisdom, have to learn how to control their normally strong, healthy and active

senses by means of a potent and well-trained will. While their experience of pleasures and of pains has to be quite normal, they have to see that these do not necessarily determine their desires and aversions. It is this kind of conscious and voluntary effort to subordinate the prompting power of the senses to the guiding control of the will, which is capable of making one grow into a sage of steady wisdom, the sage whose characteristics have been described here in such a clear and unmistakable manner. The answer so far given, in reply to the question as to what the language is which is descriptive of the sage of steady wisdom, is fittingly explanatory of the psychological processes by which such a sage becomes possessed of such wisdom. His special qualification to attain what is really the highest and the worthiest object of attainment is brought out in the remaining *ślōkas* of this chapter, which we shall take up for study in our next class.

xii

In our last class we were dealing with the characteristics of the seer of steady wisdom, and with the nature of the psychological discipline by means of which one may become such a seer blessed with such steady wisdom. I am quite sure you remember that the question स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा—what is the language which is descriptive of the seer of steady wisdom—is the first among those which Arjuna put to Śrī-Kṛishṇa regarding the seer of steady wisdom. The description of such a seer, as given in some of the *ślōkas* that we have already gone through, is obviously intended to be the answer to this first question. The other questions as to what he would say, whether he would stay or whether he would go, are not, as you may at once see, very different in import from the question regarding the way in which he should be described; for, what he would say, and whether he would stay or whether he would go, are certainly to be included in any description of him which at all pretends to be full. Nevertheless, we can see that all these questions do not mean the same thing. The second question, as to what he would say, really relates to what his attitude would be regarding life in society and all its associated duties and responsibilities. It is answered in the *ślōka* with which we begin our work to-day. Let us now proceed to see how this is done:—

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।
यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥ ६९ ॥

69. That, which is night to all beings, therein the self-controlling sage is awake. That is night to the discerning seer, wherein the (other) beings are awake.

Let us here note that the *samyamin* or the self-controlling sage is taken to be the same as the *muni* or seer who is blessed with the intuitive vision of inner inspiration. If we remember well that self-control is the only means by which self-realization can be accomplished, and that self-realization, when accomplished, opens out fully the inner eyes of the soul, we may see at once the meaning of this identification of the self-controlling sage with the truly discerning seer. The steady wisdom of the self-controlling sage, who is at the same time a seer blessed with the divine vision of truth, makes him look upon life in a manner, which is so entirely different from the way, in which all those, who are not blessed with such vision and with such wisdom, are prone to look upon it. It is this fact, which is brought out in this *ślōka*, although it reads very much like a riddle. The night is the time of darkness and of sleep; therein even beings with wide and open eyes do not generally see, and conscious beings become unconscious through sleep. When we are wakeful, we are conscious and cognisant of the various objects of knowledge. Accordingly, the statement that, in what happens to be night to all beings, the seer of steady wisdom is awake, means that he is at all times cognisant of a certain something, which ordinary beings other than himself cannot usually cognise. The reference here is to the seer's power of self-realization and God-realization. The statement that, in what happens to be night to the seer, all other beings are awake, means that these other beings concentrate their attention and love on what he treats with so much real indifference as almost to be non-cognisant of it. The meaning is that he completely discards the worldly love of pleasure and of power. The common worldly man is naturally as blind to the unworldly wisdom and divine aspirations of the philosophic seer, as this latter is to the low and unmixed worldliness of the former. Accordingly, the ways of the

seer of steady wisdom are not those which are followed by such men and women as are worldly out of natural necessity. The question, whether this characteristic unworldliness of the seer makes it obligatory on him to retire from the world, is dealt with in the next two *ślōkas.*

आपूर्यमाणमचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥७०॥

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निस्स्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥ ७१ ॥

70. He (indeed) attains peace into whom all desires enter, in the manner in which the waters enter the ocean, which is (ever) being filled and is (yet) of unshakable steadfastness; but not he who hankers after objects of desire.

71. The man who, having abandoned all desires, lives without hankerings, without selfishness, and without egotism,—he attains peace.

These *ślōkas* make it known to us that the seer of steady wisdom may well be *in* the world and manage at the same time not to be *of* it. Innumerable rivers pour their waters in great abundance into the great ocean; and yet it does not overflow it banks, and its steadfastness is ever firm and unshakable. To guard the great ocean from overflowing its banks, it is not in the least necessary to prevent the rivers from flowing into it. In this same manner a a man may, if he be such a seer, allow all desires to enter into his mind, and may, nevertheless, manage at the same time to maintain unimpaired the unshakable steadfastness of his own wisdom. From the latter of these two *ślōkas* it comes out clearly enough that to give up all desires is really so to live our lives as to be free from hankerings, from selfishness and from egotism. The giving up of desires through external restraint or obstruction cannot give rise to this kind of freedom from hankerings and selfishness and egotism;

it is sure to leave within the mind the polluting relish for the enjoyment of the objects of desire almost exactly in the same condition in which it was before. What is really required of us in achieving moral progress is the purification of the mind from the taint of egotism and selfishness; for it is these undesirable qualities that give rise to *karma* and its tendencies, compelling the soul to undergo reincarnation again and again. Therefore the statement चित्तमेव हि संसारस्तत् प्रयत्नेन शोधयेत् is distinctly Vēdāntic in character; and it means that the mind itself is in reality the cause of the soul's recurring cycle of reincarnations, and that it has therefore to be purified through effort by all those who seek to obtain the salvation of *mōksha*. Wherein this purification of the mind consists, comes out very distinctly from what is declared in one of the well known minor *Upanishads*. Therein it is said—

मनो हि द्विविधं प्रोक्तं शुद्धं चाशुद्धमेव च ।
अशुद्धं कामसङ्कल्पं शुद्धं कामविवर्जितम् ॥

मन एव मनुष्याणां कारणं बन्धमोक्षयोः ।
बन्धाय विषयासक्तं मुक्तै निर्विषयं स्मृतम् ॥

From this we gather that, judged morally, the human mind is of two kinds, namely, that which is pure and that which is impure; that the mind which aims at securing the objects of desire and enjoyment is impure, while that which is free from all such attachment to objects of desire is pure; that the mind itself is hence the cause of the bondage of our souls, as it is also of their final liberation from material bondage, seeing that that mind which is attached to the objects of sense-enjoyment gives rise to the bondage of the soul in matter, while that which is free from such attachment leads to the very salvation of the soul. Let us again observe that what is given here as the surest means for the attainment of peace, purity and salvation is not the forced asceticism of mere external restraint. Such asceticism is of no value at all, so long as the mind within has not become free from attachment to the objects of such enjoyment. Srī-Kṛishṇa's teaching in this respect is that the man, who really wishes to be saved, must cultivate

successfully the valuable moral power of internal self-restraint. To keep back under compulsion from the objects of sense-enjoyment, when the mind is in reality inflamed with a burning passion for them, is no less than to nurse moral weakness within the heart, so as to make it positively harder to achieve true spiritual advancement. What we have therefore to do is not to run away from the worldly life of society and civilisation. Such a flight in itself cannot secure salvation for us. On the other hand, we have to allow ourselves to come freely into contact with the life of society and the objects of the senses and also to feel the pleasures and the pains which are thereby produced: and yet we have to take care that our wisdom is at the same time steadfast and unshaken, even as the ocean is steadfast and does not overflow its banks in spite of innumerable rivers pouring their voluminous contents incessantly into it. Clearly the harm here is not in perceiving the various objects of the senses so as to experience all the consequent pains and pleasures; on the other hand, it is altogether in becoming attached to the objects of sense-enjoyment. Indeed it is such an attachment which is ever the prolific parent of the multitudinous desires that arise in the human heart; and freedom from it necessarily implies freedom from all hankering after sense-enjoyment. How in the presence of this doubly enforced freedom of our moral nature, neither selfishness nor egotism can erect its head, it must be easy for all of us to see at once. In the absence of such internal freedom and moral purity, coerced external asceticism is wholly incapable of killing either selfishness or egotism. The foolish ascetic, who, with an unripe and unchastened heart, runs away from home and from society into the forest, is in no way nearer to the goal of self-perfection. His very flight is due to selfish fear; and his life of asceticism can do him no good, for the simple reason that it is incapable of doing any good to others. But the seer of steady wisdom, whose heart is ripe and pure enough to enable him to live the life of genuine renunciation, is sure to live such a life equally well at home and in the midst of society, or away from home and in the forest. In any case his life is bound to be absolutely unselfish and abundantly helpful. Thus Śrī-Kṛishṇa's reply to Arjuna's question, as to whether the seer of steady wisdom would stay in society or would go away from it, is that he might

either stay or go, and that he would in all probability rather stay than go away. The state of such a seer of steady wisdom is further characterised in the following manner:—

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।
स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ॥ ७२ ॥

72. O Arjuna, this is the *brāhmī* state. After attaining this, one does not become deluded. By abiding in this (state), even at the time of (one's) end, one obtains the 'bliss of Brahman'.

The state of the seer of steady wisdom—the state which has been so fully described in some of the previous *ślōkas*—is herein spoken of as *brāhmī*. This Sanskrit word is a feminine adjective derived from the neuter noun *brahman*, which generally denotes that infinite and all-pervading Being, who is the foundation and life and aim of the universe. The state which is *brāhmī* may therefore be well understood to be that which is divinely philosophical; and the declaration, that the state of the seer of steady wisdom is divinely philosophical, means that it is different from those other states which are ordinarily known as *laukikī* and *vaidikī*. The *laukikī* state is the worldly man's state of worldliness, while the *vaidikī* state is the state of the *vēdavādarata*, to whom there is no higher or nobler object of human pursuit than the attainment of the power and enjoyments, which may be derived from the adoption of the Vēdic religion of sacrifices. The *brāhmī* state is certainly different from both these, as we have already seen. It is the steadfast state of the seer of steady wisdom, whose *summum bonum* is self-realisation and God-realisation, and whose means for the attainment of this *summum bonum* is the living of the absolutely disinterested life of unselfish duty done well and with concentrated attention. The delusion, from which one becomes naturally free after the attainment of this state of divinely philosophical wisdom, is the delusion of mistaking pleasure for happiness and of looking upon the acquisition of power and of enjoyments as the chief aim of life. The worldly man's worldliness is in fact founded on and fostered by such a delusion. To love, even at the sacrifice of some worldly

advantages, the pleasures of paradise, so well as to seek in earnest the power which is needed for their acquisition, is really no part of the purely secular worldliness of the common man of the world. Still, he who aims at winning *Svarga* with all the pleasures, which appertain to the life that may be lived therein, cannot be said to have fully seen through and risen above the delusion. His faith in his religion of sacrifices and rewards enables him only to substitute ideal celestial pleasures in the place of actual terrestrial ones in his own scheme of life. Hence it is only the seer of steady wisdom—who can succeed in getting into that divinely philosophical state which is here called *brāhmī sthitiḥ*—that is able to free himself from the ensnaring entanglements of such a delusive moral ideal. He will never be led to consider either terrestrial or celestial pleasures to be the same as the supreme bliss of the salvation of self-realisation and God-realisation. The great moral and spiritual efficacy of this divinely philosophical state of steadfast wisdom, which aims at self-realisation and God-realisation, has been well pointed out to us already; and as we have been told, even a little of effort on our part to get into such a state of true wisdom is calculated to save us from great fear and great danger. This same noteworthy efficacy of it is now drawn attention to in another way by the statement that, through abiding in such a state of philosophic wisdom even at the end of one's life, one obtains the bliss of the *Brahman*. This statement does not, of course, mean that one may wantonly postpone the adoption of this divinely philosophical ideal of life and its associated moral discipline to the very end of life, even when it is possible for one to put it into practice very much earlier. We shall see how it is distinctly declared later on in the *Gītā*, that it is never too early in life to follow the philosophy of conduct which is taught therein; and what we are told here is that it is also never too late to do so. A man may not have early in life the opportunity to know and to appreciate the value of this divine philosophy of conduct as expounded by Śrī-Kṛishṇa. He may become acquainted with it, or become able and inclined to appreciate it, only when it is rather late in life. Even then he has no reason to feel afraid that his following this philosophy of conduct may not help him in attaining the desired salvation of his soul. What is wanted of him, whether he has all his future before him still to live, or whether he is closely nearing

the end of his life, is such a firm, sincere and unshakable abidance in the divinely philosophical state of non-attachment and true wisdom, as is clearly characteristic of the genuine seer of steady wisdom. The sincerity and the firmness of the abidance therein are in themselves quite enough to enable him to obtain the eternal bliss of the soul's emancipation from the bondage of matter, as well as of its reunion with the divine principle and its life of infinite power and glory and joy. The expression *Brahmanirvāṇa*, occurring in the last *ślōka* of this second chapter of the *Gītā*, is synonymous with *Brahmānanda* ; and when a soul becomes fit for the attainment of this bliss of the *Brahman*, its emancipation from the bondage of matter and from all its unwholesome limitations has to be really so complete that it can no longer be possible for that soul to abide in anything which is other than itself or other than the divinity which has become its highest object of attainment. We have already seen how the life of the seer of steady wisdom is naturally directed towards the achievement of self-realisation and God-realisation ; and a European exponent of the *Gītā* has endeavoured to bring out the meaning of *Brahmanirvāṇa*, as used here, by means of a sentence which he has quoted in English from one of Plato's dialogues thus :—" If the soul take its departure in a state of purity, not carrying with it any clinging impurities of the body—impurities which, during life, it never willingly shared in, but always avoided—gathering itself into itself, and making this separation from the body its aim and study, ...well then, so prepared, the soul departs to that invisible region which is, of its own nature, the region of the Divine, the Immortal and the Wise." The parallelism between these ideas of Plato, as expressed in his *Phaedo*, and the teachings of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as given in the *Gītā*, regarding the nature and the destiny of the seer of steady wisdom, is so close and so markedly striking, that we cannot fail to realise therefrom how accordantly true truth always is in all places and in all ages and to all those who have eyes to see it in its native grandeur of unsullied purity.

Thus ends the second chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*. This chapter generally goes by the name of *Sāṅkhya-yōga*. We have seen how in this chapter the word *sāṅkhya* is, as distinguished from *karman*, used in the sense of *jñāna*, that is in the sense of a

theory arrived at in accordance with speculative reason; while *karman*, translatable as *yōga* in one of its many significations, means the actual carrying out of a theory in practice by means of an appropriate process of its application. In the name of the chapter as *Sāṅkhya-yōga*, however, the word *yōga* means, as it often does, a connected exposition of any topic or theme. I am sure that most of you know that every chapter in the *Bhagavadgītā* is made to go by the name of a *yōga*. Accordingly, the name of this chapter as *Sāṅkhya-yōga* implies that it gives an exposition of the theoretical doctrines underlying the philosophy of conduct taught in the *Bhagavadgītā*; and our knowledge of the contents of the chapter abundantly justifies this name which has been given to it. Indeed, we have in it the ground-plan and the basement on which the whole edifice of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's philosophy of conduct is erected. A well-known commentator on the *Gītā* has said that the second chapter in it teaches that the wise man should, by constantly meditating on God, learn to live the life of the disinterested performance of duties, and that, otherwise, his life would prove a mere hindrance to him in respect of the attainment of the supreme salvation of *mōksha* or soul-emancipation. Another equally well-known commentator is of opinion that the topics dealt with in this chapter of the *Gītā* are—firstly the speculative foundation of the philosophy of conduct, then the practical processes of realising that philosophy in life, then the purification of the mind resulting from the adoption of those practical processes, and lastly the abiding establishment of one in that state of steady wisdom which ensures the attainment of the soul's emancipation from all bondage and from all limitations. Another commentator, again, of no less eminence and authority, classifies the contents of this chapter under the three heads of the immortality of the soul, the life of disinterested duty, and the state and destiny of the seer of steady wisdom. According to this last commentator, the life of disinterested duty seems to be held to be a logical consequence of the established truth of the immortality of the soul, at the same time that that life is conceived to be the means by which, when sufficiently perfected and appropriately used, the truth of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul may be demonstrated to the satisfaction of all capable and earnest aspirants. And the seer of steady wisdom as described here

is no other than such a capable and earnest aspirant—an aspirant who has striven with notable success to attain the requisite perfection of internal peace and dispassionate disinterestedness. By putting together all these views regarding the main items of teaching which are given in this chapter, we are easily led to see how it is that herein we have the ground-plan of the whole of the noble philosophical and religious edifice, which is known to have been designed and constructed by Śrī-Krishṇa as the divine teacher of the ever glorious and immortal *Bhagavadgītā*. Although these commentators differ from one another to some extent in regard to the way in which they look at the main contents of the chapter, their views are not really in conflict with one another; the difference between them arises almost entirely from the fact that there is a more or less marked variation in respect of the points to which they desire to attach importance and to draw prominent attention. The consensus of opinion among them may, without much difficulty, be made out to agree upon the following points. And they are: (i) firstly—that the soul is immaterial, immutable and immortal; that its association with and limitation by matter is due to *karma*; that *karma*, which so confines the soul in matter and cripples its powers for the time being, is caused as well as kept up by attachement to the objects of the senses and to the results of work; and that the enforcement of non-attachment in relation to these annihilates *karma* and enables the soul to become so free as to realise itself: (ii) secondly—that the practical enforcement of the lesson of non-attachment is possible only where there is absolute unselfishness, strenuous endeavour, and great concentration of mind in relation to the performance of religious as well as secular work; that all duty has for this purpose to be done for its own sake; that the title that men have is in reality only to the doing of the duty both well and unselfishly, but not to the fruits arising therefrom; that work in itself, whatever its nature may be, is incapable of producing the bondage of *karma*; that it is the disposition of the mind of the worker which is really responsible for the production or non-production of this bondage; and that the power to command the appropriate unselfish disposition, which is in this manner morally more potent than the work itself, enables one to live the perfect life of flawlessness and so to reach easily the goal of the soul's salvation:

(iii) thirdly—that the seer of steady wisdom, whose one aim is to go to this goal by living the requisite life of strenuous effort and absolute unselfishness, has to learn by experience that the bliss of self-realisation is so transcendant as to excel all those pleasures and enjoyments which are in any manner dependent upon external objects; that since self-realisation can come only through self-conquest, the first care of such a seer has to be the subjugation of the senses, so as to make it impossible for them to tempt him to be selfish at any time by means of the pleasures and pains which are naturally experienced in association with sensations; that, as the conquest of the senses is not easily achieved, for the reason that they are in themselves very masterful and can be subdued effectively only by killing the internal relish for pleasures but not by any kind of forced external sense-starvation, the seer has to practice *yōgic* meditation and mental concentration, having God as the one and only supreme object of devotion; and that, by so doing, his mind will become so pure and his wisdom so steady, that it will then be quite easy and natural for him to reconcile both active achievement and hearty renunciation in his own life: (iv) and fourthly and lastly—that this life of unattached and unwordly endeavour and achievement is representative of that state of philosophic wisdom which is truly divine; that in this state of philosophic wisdom there can be no room either for the delusion of interested worldliness or for that of what is a similar other-worldliness; and that earnest and sincere abidance in such a state of divinely philosophic wisdom, howsoever late in life it may be adopted, unerringly leads one to the goal of the soul's salvation, which is in the region of the Wise, the Immortal and the Divinely Blissful.

Of the four main heads under which I have arranged the contents of this chapter, in general agreement with the analysis of it as given by more than one orthodox commentator, it is evident that the topics under the first head deal with what happens to be the speculative and the rational foundation of a true philosophy of conduct, and that the topics under the fourth head relate chiefly to the nature and value of the *summum bonum* which has to be aimed at by such a philosophy of conduct. The topics under both these heads together constitute the aspect of *jñāna*, or what may be called the rationale of the philosophy of conduct taught in the *Gītā*,

Similarly the topics under the second and the third heads may be seen to relate mainly to the practical carrying out, or to the *karman* aspect, of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's philosophy of conduct, in as much as those under the second head deal with the principles underlying the practice of that conduct, while those under the third head are intended to be descriptive of the nature and the aims of the unwaveringly wise seer, who has successfully put into practice such a philosophy of conduct in his own life. In dealing with the seer of such unwavering wisdom, it is pointed out, as we have already seen, that the acquisition and the steady maintenance of his wisdom are both dependent upon divine devotion and meditation. We thus hit upon *dhyāna*, which in fact constitutes the soul as well as the life of *bhakti ;* it is brought in here as an aid to the practical living of the philosophic seer's life of steady wisdom. Thus we have in this chapter a brief statement of *jñāna-yōga*, and *karma-yōga*, and of *dhyāna-yōga* in its relation to *bhakti-yōga.* All these subjects are developed fully in the later chapters of the *Gītā*, as we are sure to learn, when we become acquainted with them in the course of our study of the work; and the fact that they are all briefly noticed in this chapter in a clear and unmistakable manner, so that their mutual relations may be distinctly disclosed, is enough to show that in it we have the ground-plan of the whole of the *Bhagavadgītā.* The true *jñāna-yōga* naturally leads to the righteous *karma-yōga*, which in its turn leads to the direct and personal demonstration of the truth of the *jñāna-yōga* itself. This is indeed as it should be; and in the *Gītā* they are distinctly shown to be so related to each other. Every theory of the philosophy of conduct has necessarily to formulate a connected course of practical life, which course has to be logically deduced and developed out of the theory, and has to be at the same time the means of proving through experience the truth of the theory itself. Theory has to lead to the logically acquired knowledge of the nature of the connected practice, and practice has to lead to the personal realisation in experience of the essential truthfulness of the theory itself. Where the relation between theory and practice is otherwise, there both of them are apt to be wrong and misleading. And although *dhyāna-yōga* and *bhakti-yōga* are introduced in this chapter as important aids to *karma-yōga*, the doubly intimate nature of the relation of this last

to *jñāna-yōga* gives to them, that is, to divine meditation and to loving devotion, much more than a mere subsidiary value. Indeed the power of *karma-yōga* to demonstrate to the satisfaction of personal experience the truth of the corresponding *jñāna-yōga* is almost entirely dependent upon the successful practice of *dhyāna* and *bhakti*. The unselfish life of disinterested duty cannot at all be lived by man, unless by the practice of meditation and devotion he acquires the requisite strength of will and peace of mind, so as not to be led astray by the ever alluring temptations of the deceiving senses. And it is the practice of this same meditation, which ultimately gives rise to one's self-realisation and God-realisation. Accordingly, *dhyāna* and *bhakti* support and sustain the righteous life of active disinterested duty, at the same time they give rise to the illumination of *jñāna*, which leads to the unerring realisation of soul and God and Truth. Such is a summary of the teaching contained in the second chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*.

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CHAPTER III.

To-day, we begin the study of the third chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*, which starts with a question put by Arjuna to Śrī-Krishṇa. The object with which he put the question was to obtain a clearer grasp of the teaching he had already received in respect of the ethics of conduct. I am sure you know that the readiness to put questions to the teacher, in the spirit of the true learner, is one of the essential qualities of a typical disciple, that is, of a disciple who is intelligent enough to be rationally inquisitive at the same time that he is pliable enough not to be unimpressionable or too hypercritical. The great problem of the philosophy of conduct is expounded in the *Bhagavadgītā* in the manner of a conversation between the teacher and the disciple ; and we shall see later on that Śrī-Krishṇa himself speaks of the *Gītā* as a *samvāda*, which means a dialogue. There are some critics who find fault with the *Bhagavadgītā*, saying that it abounds in repetitions. These critics do not obviously take into consideration that it is a *samvāda*. Generally speaking, there are three methods in which any subject of real philosophic interest, like what is dealt with in the *Bhagavadgītā*, may be expounded. These may be named as the expository, the dialectic, and the conversational methods. Of these, it is only in the expository method, as it is followed largely by modern writers of essays and dissertations in Europe, that we have as little as possible of repetition in thought or in expression. The dialectic method is that which is largely followed by philosophic controversialists in Sanskrit. The essence of this method consists in first stating the *pūrvapaksha* or the position of such opponents as have to be attacked, then in dealing out the needed criticism to those opponents, and finally in stating and proving what is held to be the unimpeachable position of the author himself. This method of expounding philosophic themes is not unknown to Europe, seeing that it is so like the method followed by the school-men of the middle ages. The very nature of this method enables us to see at once that in it repetition cannot at all be avoided : indeed a certain amount of repetition is actually needed

by it. If we examine the third method of exposition, that which I have called conversational, we cannot fail to see that in it also a certain amount of repetition is quite necessary. As a matter of fact, in works like Plato's Dialogues, for instance, the appropriate repetition of thoughts and expressions constitutes a part of the merit of the method of exposition adopted in them. Therefore, if we understand that the *Bhagavadgītā* was not written out in the form of a modern essay, but that it gives out the teachings of a master to an earnest disciple in the form of a direct personal conversation, we are certain to make out the groundless character of the criticism, which attributes demerit to the *Bhagavadgītā*, on the score that certain thoughts and expressions are repeated therein rather frequently. The repetition that is found in the *Gītā* is mainly due to its being a *samvāda*, and is calculated to enhance the clearness and impressiveness of the teaching given therein. Many of you may think that this defence of the method of exposition adopted in the *Gītā* is after all unnecessary; but we should not too readily ignore the fact that there are critics who criticise works like the *Gītā* merely for the sake of criticism. Such critics find it often convenient to be blind even to self-evident facts. The eye sees what it brings with it the power of seeing; and it is hence that a certain class of critics see in the *Gītā* mainly such things as disconnection, inconsistency and redundancy. We shall see, as we proceed, how these critics only betray their own bias and hasty precipitancy in thought. Let us now go on and learn how this chapter begins.

अर्जुन उवाच—

ज्यायसी चेत् कर्मणस्ते मता बुद्धिर्जनार्दन ।
तत् किं कर्माणि घोरे मां नियोजयसि केशव ॥ १ ॥

व्यामिश्रेणैव वाक्येन बुद्धिं मोहयसीव मे ।
तदेकं वद निश्चित्य येन श्रेयोऽहमाप्नुयाम् ॥ २ ॥

ARJUNA SAID—

1. O Kṛishṇa, if the disposition of the mind is considered by you to be superior to work, then why do you order me, O Kṛishṇa, to do work which is cruel?

2. You seem to be confusing my mind by means of language which is really mixed up. Therefore, tell me, after ascertaining well, that one thing by which I may attain bliss.

The question asked here arises clearly out of the teaching given by Śrī-Kṛishṇa, that, in the matter of the proper conduct of life, men ought to take greater care of their motives and mental disposition than of the deeds which they actually do from time to time. Arjuna, you may remember, was told that deeds in themselves cannot create the bondage of *karma*, and that what really creates it is the motive with which men do their deeds. After granting that such was indeed the case, Arjuna evidently understood Śrī-Kṛishṇa to mean that men were at liberty to do any kind of work as their duty, and that no harm at all would arise unto them out of what might be called an inappropriate choice of duty, provided that whatever was done as duty was always done with the proper motive. This interpretation of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teaching is not impossible, although it is decidedly incorrect. Hence arose the unwillingness of Arjuna to do as his duty a deed which was essentially cruel in character; and hence also his question here. Slaughtering friends and preceptors and relations in battle may not, when the motive is right, produce sin; but if it is only the motive that we have to take care of, and if we may, in taking care of the motive, ignore all obligations in relation to the choice of the deeds that we have to do, then cruel and unpleasant deeds like inflicting death on fellow-men in battle need never become our duty. Arjuna did not obviously understand that, according to Śrī-Kṛishṇa, there was an inviolable rule of choice in regard to the work which men had to do in life. Only that work happens to be our duty, the doing of which has become incumbent upon us in accordance with such a rule. Even the duty, which is so determined, will produce the bondage of *karma* and give rise to sin, if done with impure motives of selfishness. Our duty, we are told, devolves upon us in accordance with the nature of our fitness to serve society and civilisation—a fitness which is due partly to heredity and endowments and partly to education and opportunities. And duty, which has thus devolved upon us, has to be done by us with absolute dis-

interestedness. Accordingly, in the teaching given by Śrī-Kṛishṇa there are two obligatory conditions : the first is that the choice of our duty is in no way dependent upon our likes and dislikes—and the second is that, whatever may turn out to be the work which is our duty, we have to do it with utter unselfishness. The unselfish determination of the mental disposition is undoubtedly the first necessity, as this in itself leads to the absence of likes and dislikes in relation to the choice of duty. Our duty is always determined for us by our fitness for service : and no duty, which so comes to us, have we any right to reject. For, in that very endeavour to reject it, we betray a feeling of dislike in relation to it, which dislike is naturally associated with a feeling of the opposite kind in relation to something else. Therefore, in taking due care of the required mental disposition of disinterestedness, we are also taking care to see that we do not indulge in any likes and dislikes in relation to the choice of our duty. Still, Arjuna's misunderstanding of the teaching, as given by Śrī-Kṛishṇa, is quite excusable. To his question Śrī-Kṛishṇa replied thus :—

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

लोकेऽस्मिन् द्विविधा निष्ठा पुरा प्रोक्ता मयानघ ।
ज्ञानयोगेन साङ्ख्यानां कर्मयोगेन योगिनाम् ॥ ३ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID—

3. O worthy (Arjuna), I have told you already that there is a double position in this world (in regard to the philosophy of conduct),—that of the *sāṇkhyas* (which is determined) by the application of thought, and that of the *yōgins* (which is determined) by the practice of work.

In this *ślōka* we have again the same old contrast between *sāṅkhya* and *yōga*, that is, between theory and practice, brought to view. To the speculative thinker it would naturally occur that to take care of the mind that thinks and feels is morally more important than to take care of the deed that is to be striven for and done.

But to the practical worker, to whom the actual living of the life is more important than to speculate about the ideals of life, the actual work of life is sure to be of much greater moment than all kinds of thought and speculation. Śrī-Kṛishṇa's endeavour here is to show to Arjuna that neither of these positions is exclusively right or exclusively wrong. Work without the help of thought is as productive of harm, as mere thought, which is unassociated with work, is apt to be barren. Therefore to reason about duty and conduct, and understand why it is that all duty is obligatory, and how it is that it has to be performed, are things fully as essential as the performance of the duty, which has devolved upon us, in the manner in which it has to be performed. We can none of us be pure and simple *sāṅkhyas* or pure and simple *yōgins*. For, the endeavour to be either a pure and simple *sāṅkhya* or a pure and simple *yōgin* can mean nothing other than the attempt to separate theory and practice from each other completely. Such a separation of theory and practice is quite impracticable and unphilosophical; and it is only ignorant persons that maintain that *sāṅkhya* and *yōga* are disconnected and different. Every true theory has to lead to the formulation of the correct practice, and correct practice in its turn has to give rise to the proper apprehension of the truth of the theory. Such being always the right relation between theory and practice, it is hard not to know how, without the light of theory, practice may often precipitate us into pitfalls, or how, without the support of practice, theory may end in mere dream or delusion. It is in not understanding well this inseparable union between theory and practice that Arjuna's difficulty lay; and Śrī-Kṛishṇa therefore at once caught hold of the very heart of the questioner's difficulty and explained to him how the problem of conduct may be examined either from the theoretical or from the practical stand-point, and how, when examined from either of these stand-points, it gives no scope for any man to get out of the obligation of having to do his duty. Inactivity is utterly impossible for us, in as much as the very material nature of our bodies compels us to do work; and even if inactivity were possible, inaction would not of itself give rise to the wished-for freedom from the bondage of *karma*. When action is thus inevitable, and the nature of the action is determined by the corresponding fitness of the agent, there really can be no room for

choice either between action and inaction or between duty which is pleasant and attractive and duty which is unpleasant and unattractive. In some of the following *ślōkas* it is these ideas in regard to work that are brought out step by step.

न कर्मणामनारम्भान्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ४ ॥

न हि कश्चित् क्षणमपि जातु तिष्ठत्यकर्मकृत् ।
कार्यते ह्यवशः कर्म सर्वः प्रकृतिजैर्गुणैः ॥ ५ ॥

4. A man does not attain the state of being unaffected by *karma* by not performing work; nor does he attain the accomplishment of the end by merely giving up (all work).

5. Indeed, no one is at any time without doing (any) work even for a (brief) moment; for, every one is uncontrollably led to perform work by the qualities which are born of *prakṛiti*.

In these two *ślōkas* we are told firstly that the non-performance of work does not lead to the desired freedom from the bondage of *karma*, and secondly that absolute non-performance of work is by nature impossible. The attainment of the end, which is spoken of here as *siddhi*, is nothing other than obtaining what is mentioned in the same *ślōka* as *naishkarmya*. This last word has been translated here as the condition in which one is wholly free from the binding influence of the impressed tendencies of *karma*. We have already seen how it is in the very nature of our physical constitution, that all the thoughts we think, the words we utter and the deeds we do, leave their impress upon us, and how this impress, which is so stamped upon us, determines for us our character and our tendencies and tastes. Under these circumstances, the statement that the non-performance of work does not in itself enable us to be free from all such impressed tendencies certainly requires to be explained. In connection with this impress, which is left on us by what we think or say or do, we have to see that it may be either physcial or mental

in its aspect. The impress of *karma* and its correlated tendencies may get themselves woven into the very constitution of our body; they may become such an essential part of our very structure as will influence all our functions in life, whether these be physical, physiological, or psychological. And these impressed tendencies may also become, for aught we know, mainly, if not wholly, ingrained in the mind itself, so that, when the mind is primarily modified by those tendencies thus, the structure of the body becomes thereafter accordantly adjusted to the nature of the mind within. Even in modern biology, the question of the relation between structure and function in respect of the evolution of organisms is still open and largely unsolved. There are some biologists who seem to hold that it is the modification of the structure which leads to the change in the function, so that alterations in function are invariably the result of proceeding changes in the structure. There are others again who appear to be of opinion that it is the change in the function which is the true cause of the change in the structure, and that the force which impels the modification of the structure comes therefore from within. The statement of of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, that the mere non-performance of work cannot give rise to the freedom from the bondage of *karma*, distinctly implies that, in the relation between the mind and the body, the mind is, according to Him, the master and the body the servant. If, when the body is inactive, the activity of the mind is in itself enough to give rise to the bondage of *karma*, and if again physical activity, which is unassociated with the mental taint of selfishness, cannot give rise to that bondage, it certainly must follow from this that the mind is undeniably the master in the situation. If a man wants to obtain freedom from the influence of *karma*, he cannot succeed in obtaining it by merely being idle and doing no work. The non-performance of work by the body may well be associated with the simultaneous production of the binding force of *karma* as engendered by the mind. If the production of this binding force may thus go on side by side with physical inaction, it results logically from this that the real cause of the bondage of *karma* cannot be the work which is done by the body, but must be something other than such work. This is clearly the view of Śrī-Kṛishṇa. What that something is, which, being other than the work performed

by the body, is directly responsible for the production of the binding *samskāra* of *karma*, we shall see presently.

The first of the two *ślōkas* now read is intended to tell us that what produces in us the bondage of *karma* is not really the work which we do with the help of our bodies. Indeed, न कर्म लिप्यते नरे is an important statement of doctrine found in the *Īśāvāsyōpanishad*, and it means that work in itself does not cling to man. That is, the work which the body performs cannot of itself give rise to the bondage of *karma*. After pointing out this truth that work in itself is not responsible for the production of the bondage of *karma*, Śrī-Kṛishṇa further told Arjuna that no embodied being can ever avoid wholly the doing of some kind of work or other. Why He mentioned this was obviously to show to him that, even if it were true, that absolute abstension from work gave rise to freedom from the bondage of *karma*, such abstention from work was quite impossible in the world of embodied beings. How that is so, can well be realised by all students of modern physiology. That many of the activities, which we, as embodied beings, go through from day to day, from hour to hour and minute to minute, are actually dependent upon the very nature of our bodily composition, is borne out very well by modern physiology. Whether we are asleep or awake, whether we are more than normally active or inactive, so long as we really manage to live at all, we are all incessantly performing work. This statement is strictly in accord with modern physical science. Part of the work that we perform is consciously done by us, and part is also unconsciously done. Our very life is capable of being defined as a continuous course of work done by us consciously or unconsciously. The starving man does work, the sleeping man does work, and even the idle man does work. The mere determination in the mind not to do any work can never release us from this natural necessity of having to live entirely through the performance of work. The soul that is dissociated from the body may not perhaps have to live by work in this manner. But so long as the soul is associated with a material embodiment, it is impossible for life to go on otherwise than through the performance of work. Therefore, the position of those, who believe that the soul's salvation may be accomplished by making our lives as nearly as possible one of absolute passivity and quietism, is unmaintainable,

for the reason that the cause of the bondage of the soul is not the work which the body does, and also for the reason that the life of absolute passivity and quietism is altogether impossible in the case of all embodied beings. Having thus drawn prominent attention to two notable weaknesses in the argument in favour of the life of passivity and resignation, Śrī-Kṛishṇa next proceeded to mention to Arjuna what really is at the root of the soul's bondage of *karma*.

कर्मेन्द्रियाणि संयम्य य आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान् विमूढात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥ ६ ॥
यस्त्विन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स विशिष्यते ॥ ७ ॥

6. He, who, having restrained the organs of action, goes on thinking in his mind of the objects of the senses, (he) is foolish in nature and is spoken of as a person of false conduct.

7. He, who, having restrained his senses by means of the mind, begins the practice of work with the help of the organs of action, (he), being free from attachment, is superior (to the other person).

In these two *ślōkas* there are presented to us two different types of men. The first type is the man, who, believing in the life of passive inaction as the means of attaining salvation, does not work at all, and is yet not free from the inner attachment to the pleasures of the senses. The passion in the mind, which seeks the pleasurable objects of the senses, is allowed to burn well within him, and all the control that he exercises is only on the organs of activity. This man has therefore to be spoken of as the man of attached mind and inactive body. The other type of man, however, is he, whose mind is unattached and whose body is active. In the case of this latter kind of man, his body performs all such work as is natural, necessary and inevitable. Here there is no endeavour to force the body to get into an impossible condition, no attempt to

compel it to become absolutely passive and actionless. That this man does not try to accomplish what is by nature impossible, is certainly much in his favour. And he also endeavours to achieve what is very possible and highly useful in respect of the attainment of salvation; that is, he tries to free the mind from all interested attachment to the pleasurable objects of the senses. That the mind, by proper discipline, can really be made to become free from all such attachment, cannot be doubted; and all those among us, who have done anything at all for developing our capacity to exercise self-restraint, must be in a position to see clearly that it is certainly quite as possible to make the mind unattached, as it is impossible to make the body wholly passive and utterly inactive. Therefore this second type of man is decidedly superior to the man with the attached mind and the inactive body. The active man with the unattached mind is on the true road which leads to the goal; and his superiority is thus capable of being intelligently understood. It is from this proved superiority of his that we have to learn the direction in which we have to put forth our effort; and that direction is distinctly mentioned in the next *ślōka*. It is also in this way that we have to understand the full meaning of the teaching already given, that, in relation to conduct in life, the disposition of a man's mind is far superior in value to the work he does, and that the aspirant has accordingly to rely more on his mental disposition for his salvation, than upon any special form of work. Nevertheless, our option in regard to the choice of the work we have to do is indeed very limited.

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्ध्येदकर्मणः ॥ ८ ॥

8. Do you (therefore) perform the work which is obligatory; for, work is superior to no-work. Even the maintenance of the body would become impossible to you without work.

Here it is distinctly laid down that the life of action is superior to the life of inaction. This superiority of the active life seems to be due largely to the fact that without work life itself is impossible.

No society can manage to maintain itself by adopting the ideal of pure passivity and absolute renunciation of work. That no individual can ever live the life of absolute inaction requires no proof. Therefore work is an essential element in life, and contributes immensely to the well-being of the individual as well as of society. It is clearly worthwhile bearing in mind here that this statement, that work is superior to no-work, does not at all contradict what we learnt in the last chapter, to the effect that work in itself is far inferior to the disposition of the mind with which it is done. The comparative superiority of the moral potency of the mind, as contrasted with that of the work we do, is certainly incapable of contradicting the greater moral efficacy of work as compared with that of no-work. But the foolish question may well be asked—'Why should men and societies continue to live at all?' That life without work is impossible to individuals as well as to communities, need in itself be no reason at all in favour of the life of work, if utter inaction and absolute renunciation of all work are shown to be really the best means to enable us to obtain the bliss of final freedom and perfect self-realisation. From what we have studied in the *Gītā* already, we have come to know that such is not at all the case. In the manner, in which work done with inappropriate motives is apt to cause the imprisonment of the soul in matter, even so work done with appropriate motives invariably happens to be a means by which the imprisoned soul may easily be liberated. This peculiarly double capability of work, namely, that it can be a source of harm to the soul, at the same time that it may prove a source of help to it, is illustrated in certain Sanskrit writings by the example of a thorn. A thorn may pierce our skin and become broken thereunder, so as to give considerable pain to us. And to remove the thorn, which is thus proving trouble some, we may take up another thorn and use it cleverly, so that with the help of this second thorn the troublesome bit of the other broken thorn buried beneath the skin may be dislodged and removed. Here we see that the trouble caused by one thorn is capable of being removed by means of another thorn. Similar to this is the nature of work in life, in so far as the creation and the removal of the bondage of *karma* are concerned. Work can cause the bondage of *karma*, and it can remove it also. If we bear this well in mind, we cannot fail to grasp the meaning of the commandment that one

should certainly do all such duties in life as are found to be obligatory. When people undertake to do work, which is not obligatory, they often do so out of interested motives. That is why in the *Gītā* नियतकर्म or obligatory work is distinguished from काम्यकर्म or work which is usually done out of motives produced by interest and desire. The performance of this latter kind of work necessarily implies the existence of motives of selfish attachment in the worker; and since every kind of work, which is associated with such motives, is calculated to give rise to the impressed tendencies of *karma*, the performance of selfishly interested work does not deserve to be encouraged, and is not therefore commanded. On the other hand, in relation to work which is obligatory, it is possible for such work to be done either disinterestedly or with interested motives. When obligatory work is done with interested motives, it also, like all other kinds of interested work, produces the taint of *karma*. Thus the possibility of giving rise to the undesirable *samskāra* of *karma* is to be found in association with obligatory as well as optional work. Nevertheless, in the case of work which is obligatory, there is the advantage of its being at least possible for us to do such work in an absolutely disinterested manner. That is exactly why the performance of obligatory work is specially commanded here. To enable Arjuna to understand distinctly that, even in connection with the performance of obligatory work, there is always scope enough for the play of interested motives, and that selfishly directed motives will make even such work give rise to the bondage of *karma*, Śrī-Kṛishṇa pointed out to him the circumstances under which alone the performance of even obligatory work does not give rise to the bondage of *karma*. That is what we find mentioned in the next *ślōka*:

यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः ।
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्गः समाचर ॥ ९ ॥

9. Man is subject to the bondage of *karma* in relation to (every kind of) work, which is other than what is intended for *yajña*. Therefore, O Arjuna, do you, being free from attachment, perform work for that purpose.

In this context the meaning of the word *yajña* has to be definitely made out, before we try to understand what this *ślōka* means as a whole. The word is derived from the root *yaj*, which means to worship. *Yajña* interpreted in a general way means therefore an act of worship. The common significance of this word, however, is to denote such an act of worship as constitutes a sacrificial rite. The meaning of the English word 'sacrifice' is also of interest to us here in connection with the appropriate interpretation of the word *yajña*. In English, 'sacrifice' means, as you know, a special act of worship, wherein some offering is offered in accordance with certain religious regulations to the deity whom the worshipper undertakes to worship. It has also the moral significance of self-denial,—derived directly from such an act of worship. In a sacrificial act of worship, the chief part is the offering that is made unto the deity; and the worshipper thereby makes over something, which he till then considered to be his own, to the deity whom he worships in faith. This transference of the idea of proprietorship, in relation to the object of sacrifice, from the worshipping sacrificer to the deity who is worshipped, is the basis of the moral meaning underlying the English word 'sacrifice'; and it is out of the faith in this idea of the transference of proprietorship, that the morally disciplinary value of all religions has been evolved and made to grow. It cannot be unknown to most of you that certain recent writers on ethics, among Europeans also, have declared that altruism is generally evolved out of egoism. In other words, they have given clear expression to the idea that unselfishness is brought forth and made to grow in the life of man and of human civilisation largely out of certain suitable selfish promptings and desires. A man may offer a sacrifice to appease his angry God, or to seek favour at His hands, or to purify himself from the pollution of illegal or unrighteous behaviour in life. In all these cases his motive is seen at once to be of an interested character. There is no disinterestedness here at all in relation to this work of sacrifice; still it is out of such interested acts of physical sacrifice that the power to undergo the disinterested moral sacrifice is produced in men and in societies. Very few men marry, for instance, purely out of disinterested motives; but when they have married and become heads of families, they realise that, during almost every hour of their life, they have to

subordinate their own personal interests to the interests of the other members of the family. Here is a well known means of evolving unselfishness out of selfishness; and in the history of religion also the evolution of man's moral strength and spiritual englightenment has always been from lower to higher conditions. We find this same process in operation everywhere in the history of human civilisation, in enabling man to rise from the lower moral level of selfishness to the higher one of selflessness. The religion of sacrifice is invariably seen to precede in history the religion of moral self-discipline; and we may observe further that the religion of sacrifices generally becomes hallowed by the idea of inevitable obligation, before it is enabled to give birth to the religion of righteousness and moral self-culture. In other words, the religion of sacrifices has a lower as well as a comparatively higher aspect. The lower aspect of it is *kāmya* or desire-impelled; the higher is *niyata* or determined by the sense of obligation. What I mean is, that, in the lower forms of the religion of sacrifices, the various sacrificial acts of worship are almost always conducted out of interested motives of personal or communal advantage; while in the higher forms thereof the very same sacrificial acts are largely carried out under the belief, that it is morally obligatory on the part of the individual as well as of the community to perform them. And when the religion of sacrifices rises to this level of the recognition of unselfish obligation, then it naturally and at once becomes the parent of the higher religion of moral self-discipline and spiritual self-illumination. Accordingly the statement, that, elsewhere than in relation to acts of worship, work is calculated to give rise to the bondage of *karma*, means finally, that all such work as is done selfishly compels the soul to become bound in and limited by matter, and that unselfish work alone is capable of giving rise to the freedom of the soul. It, in fact, may mean something more also. The difficulty of practising absolute unselfishness in life was evidently well recognised by Śrī-Kṛishṇa. He knew, quite as well as we in these modern days of comparative religion and comparative psychology know, that selfishness itself has to be used as the means for the evolution of unselfishness in man; and He therefore seems to have taught here by implication that such selfishness, as may generally be associated with sacrificial and other acts of religious worship, is to some extent permissible. It is not that

Śrī-Kṛishṇa declared this kind of selfishness to be altogether free from harmfulness. What he obviously meant is that the prayer for the daily bread or for any other such thing is a kind of selfishness which is capable of becoming ultimately transformed into pure unalloyed unselfishness. It is probably for this reason that all acts of sacrifice and worship were declared to be incapable of producing the bondage of *karma*. How Śrī-Kṛishṇa might have meant all this will become plain to us as we go on.

सहयज्ञाः प्रजाः सृष्ट्वा पुरोवाच प्रजापतिः ।
अनेन प्रसविष्यध्वमेष वोऽस्त्विष्टकामधुक् ॥ १० ॥

देवान्भावयतानेन ते देवा भावयन्तु वः ।
परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ ॥ ११ ॥

इष्टान्भोगान्हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तानप्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ १२ ॥

10. Formerly (in the beginning), the Lord of Creatures created the creatures along with the sacrifice, and said (unto them)—"Do you breed and multiply by means of this (sacrifice), and may this be unto you the milker of your cherished desires.

11. By means of this do you honour the gods, and may those gods honour you in return. Honouring each other (thus), may you attain the supreme good.

12. Honoured by means of the sacrifice, the gods will indeed bestow on you such enjoyments as you desire; and he who, without offering unto them what they have bestowed, enjoys it (himself,—he) is undoubtedly a thief.

In these *ślōkas* we have the ideas underlying the view, that even selfishly done work, if directed towards the performance of sacrifice and religious worship, is incapable of giving rise to the bondage of

karma. We are told that the institution of sacrifice, as a part of religious worship, was brought into existence by the Creator simultaneously with the various created beings, whom also He has brought into existence. This of course need not mean that Śrī-Kṛishṇa conceived creation as having taken place at any particular point of time. According to the Vēdanta, *sṛishṭi* or creation is *anādi*; that is, it is beginningless. The meaning of this is that creation cannot be traced back to any particular point of time, in relation to which we may say that, before that point of time, the universe was wholly non-existent. Evolution and dissolution are going on side by side in the universe as we see it; and this is supposed to have been the rule from the beginning of time, and is expected to go on to the end of eternity. Nevertheless, this idea of the simultaneous creation of sacrifice and of created beings is intended to point out to us that man has never and nowhere been without a religion, and that the earliest form of religious worship consisted mainly in the offering of sacrifices. The fundamental moral value of the religious act of sacrifice is to be found in the free gift, that is made by the worshipper, of some precious and dearly cherished object to the deity he worships. In such an act there is firstly the recognition, by the worshipper, of a higher power which he is anxious to propitiate; and secondly there is in it the mental discipline, whereby he is enabled to get rid of the idea of proprietorship in relation to the various precious objects which he makes over to the deity as an offering. Neither this recognition of the higher divine power, nor this gradual unfolding of unselfishness, seems to have been anything of a superior kind in relation to the earlier and more primitive forms of sacrificial religious worship; but it cannot be denied that in all of them both these elements of virtue have existed more or less markedly. I remember a somewhat freely thinking Sanskrit Pandit telling me some years ago that the whole of our Vēdic religion was pervaded by what may be spoken of as the spirit of bribery. The worshipper offers a gift to the diety he worships; and in return for the gift so offered, the propitiated deity bestows on the worshipper one or more of the objects of his desire. Such is in reality an exact description of the earlier stages in the development of all sacrificial religions. Nevertheless, as Śrī-Kṛishṇa has taught us, even this mutual exchange of gifts between the deity and the worshipper is well

calculated to enable the worshipper to attain in due time the highest good; for, from this platform of the openly calculating religion of sacrifices, it becomes possible for man to rise to much higher levels of religious and moral realisation. The belief that a divine power bestows on us the enjoyments that we desire is in itself not at all irrational or untrue. It is pointed out in more than one place in the *Gītā* that there is nothing, which man owns and enjoys, that has not been bestowed on him by God, who is the source as well as the support of all that lives and moves in the universe. The *Upanishadic* maxim तेन विना तृणाग्रमपि न चलति—that, without Him, not even the end of a blade of grass moves—only carries to its culmination this idea, that it is the gods who bestow on their worshippers all such objects of enjoyment as they happen to possess. Another lesson of importance, which human communities must have learnt in the course of civilisation through the moral helpfulness of sacrificial religions, is the realisation of the obligatoriness of gratitude in relation to the divine Power which has been to them the giver of all gifts. The development of this sense of obligatoriness in respect of the active manifestation of gratitude is in itself capable of becoming so strong, as to make the honest and faithful worshipper feel that, if he enjoyed in an exclusively selfish manner all the objects of desire with which he was well blessed, he would indeed be living the life of a thief. In this developed recognition of the duty of worship and communion, we have the foundation of those later improvements in morality, which have taken place under the inspiring influence of religion; for it is not very hard to pass from the duty of making religious offerings to the deity to the other duty of partaking of the remnants of the offerings with other worshippers of the same diety. To part gladly with worthy and valuable things that we call our own, with the object of actively manifesting thereby our gratitude to the diety that has bestowed such things on us, is accordingly the first lesson of qualified selflessness that man learns by means of the religion of sacrifices. The next lesson of unselfishness that he learns is derived therefrom through the necessity of his having to distribute the remnants of the sacrifice among other worshippers, so that he himself may partake only of what is left after such distribution. This idea is expressed in the next *ślōka* thus:

यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ १३ ॥

13. The good, who eat of the remnant of the sacrifice, are freed from all impurities; but those wretched persons, who cook food for their own sakes, (they) feed upon sin.

In this *ślōka* we may see how Śrī-Krishṇa must have thought that even this qualified form of selflessness, which is encouraged by the religion of sacrifices, is ultimately capable of giving rise to freedom from all sin. What is meant by the statement that unworthy persons cook food for themselves is, that with them eating has ceased to be a sacrament and a means of manifesting hospitality, but has become a purely secular affair wholly intended to satisfy the animal appetite of hunger. When, however, eating loses its sacramental character, it loses also its power to serve as a means of moral education. In all important sacrificial religions of old, we may notice that eating has had a uniformly sacramental character. As a matter of fact every religion of sacrifices has its own sacramental supper so to say. In the *Aitarēya-Brāhmaṇa*, the ancient struggle between the Kshattriyas and the Brahmins may be seen to be represented as a struggle between those who wanted to make eating purely secular and those who wanted to make it strictly sacramental. The Kshattriya, representing the secular power of society, is conceived to have given his support to the secular supper, while the Brahmin, as the representative of the religious power in society, is conceived to have upheld the sacramental supper. Śrī-Krishṇa seems to have held views that inclined distinctly to the religious side, and to have maintained that the purely secular supper, whereby a man might feed himself quite well enough, was nevertheless calculated to make him become filled with sin. Of all the acts which men do in response to their animal appetites, the act of eating is surely one of the most urgent and imperious; and when men learn how to exercise self-control and manifest self-sacrifice in relation to such an act, they at once succeed in demonstrating that their moral strength is fully worthy of honorable consideration. In these modern days it certainly appears to us

to be too cumbrous to make every act of eating an act of religious offering and worship. Still, that is how eating is looked upon by the large body of Hindus even to-day. No pious Hindu ever eats anything which has not been offered in worship to his God, and which he is not able to share with other fellow-worshippers. In spite of certain conveniences, which we may freely derive from the total secularisation of life, it is surely our duty to examine whether the loss accruing to society therefrom will not after all outstrip the advantages. If, without losing the moral meaning and value associated with the sacramental supper, we succeed in making the act of eating free from unnecessary restrictions and inconveniences, we accomplish thereby what is to a certain extent helpful to progress. If, however, freedom and convenience in the matter of eating are to be obtained at the risk of losing the moral discipline, which the sacramental conception of it gives, the achievement is calculated to be surely more harmful than beneficial. The underlying theory of the Vēdic religion of sacrifices, from which the sacramental conception of supper seems to have been derived, is in this light explained in the following three *ślōkas* :—

अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसंभवः ।
यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ १४ ॥

कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम् ।
तस्मात्सर्वगतं ब्रह्म नित्यं यज्ञे प्रतिष्ठितम् ॥ १५ ॥

एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः ।
अघायुरिन्द्रियारामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति ॥ १६ ॥

14. All beings live by food; the production of food is due to rain; rain is caused by sacrifice; sacrifice is evolved out of work.

15. Work springs out of *brahman*; and *brahman* is born out of the indestructible; therefore the *brahman*, which is everywhere, is for ever established in sacrifice.

16. He, who does not propel here the wheel, so set in motion, to move on, O Arjuna, (he) lives in vain, himself finding delight in the (pleasures of the) senses and his life being one of sin.

It is necessary to note here that the word *parjanya*, which has been translated as *rain*, is the name of a Vēdic deity understood to be the god of rain. Since the idea here cannot be that this god himself is created through sacrifice, we have to understand that it serves to propitiate him, and that he thereupon sends down the fertilising rain. It must be thus that he has himself come to stand for *rain*. The word *brahman* literally means any big thing, the growth whereof is unlimited. Its meaning in this context has to be determined by the statement that it is born out of the Indestructible, which of course is the same as the Immodifiable Infinite. Hence *brahman* is here the modifiable infinite—which is the same thing as *prakṛiti*. It is clearly noteworthy in the theory of sacrifice, as explained here, that sacrifice itself rests on the recognition of the full possibility of an interchange of goodwill between the worshipping sacrificer and the worshipped deity. It seems to be held that, unless the gods are worshipped by means of sacrifices, they will not send down the very rain that makes the earth fruitful for man. That the due downpour of the rains in the due seasons is dependent upon the favour of the gods, is not exclusively an ancient Indian notion, inasmuch as such a notion is known to have prevailed elsewhere also. That, without the pleasure of the gods, man cannot enjoy here on earth favourable seasons and plenty and prosperity, may appear to some of our modern men a rather strange and superstitious way of looking at certain very well known natural phenomena. Those who are inclined to look with disfavour upon this manner of explaining natural phenomena by means of supernatural divine agencies—even they cannot rightly object to the statement that no sacrifice can be performed without work, that no work is possible to an embodied being except through the embodiment, and that the immensely infinite expanse of matter in the universe, the basis of which we have learnt to speak of as *prakṛiti*, is ultimately derived somehow from a Supreme Source of Power, which, being above and beyond nature, constitutes at the same

time the intimate life and the enduring foundation thereof. I am aware that the last part of this statement is apt to be objected to by those who are atheistic, and in relation to whom nature acts as a blinding wall preventing them from realising anything above and beyond her at all. But to all those, to whom the ascent from nature to nature's God appears to be both rational and necessary, there can be nothing strange in the statement, which is made here, that *prakṛiti* is somehow derived out of *Parama-Purusha*, the Supreme Person, who alone is in perfection the Indestructible Being. This *prakṛiti*, which also is in its own way infinite, is, however, immediately responsible for all the powers and capabilities, which embodied beings possess for the performance of work. And work, which embodied beings are so enabled by nature to perform, may be performed either in the manner of conducting sacrifices and thus pleasing the gods, or it may be performed in the spirit of those selfish and sinful persons who earn their wages and cook their food solely for themselves. When the work, which embodied beings do, happens to be chiefly selfish, it can no longer be seen to be capable of pleasing the gods and of giving rise to plenty and prosperity. Whether we believe that this absence of plenty and prosperity is due to the displeasure of the gods, who have not been duly propitiated by sacrifices, or whether we believe that it is not due to such a cause, this much is quite certain, that no community, the members of which are absolutely selfish and do not in the least possess the power of working with unselfish aims for purposes other than their own immediate pleasure and advantage, can ever succeed in commanding anything like abiding plenty or enduring prosperity. If, therefore, true plenty and prosperity can be commanded by us only with the help of unselfish work, and if the performance of sacrifice is, as we have already seen, conducive to the development of unselfishness, surely the statement, that, without sacrifice, the food on which we have all to flourish cannot be produced in abundance, requires no further justification. Unless unselfishness operates freely in the civilised life of human communities, it is impossible for them to feel, with the confirming evidence of their own experience, that nature is always inclined to be propitious unto them. What is evidently observed in such cases is that the moral force of human unselfishness happens to succeed in propitiating

nature herself, so as to induce her to become the prolific mother of plenty and prosperity. So far, there is really not much room for any serious difference of opinion. Nature has, we may say, stored up within herself all the potency which embodied beings have for the performance of work. She has also in her own command much of that plenty and prosperity, which, by propitiating her, man may always obtain and enjoy through her kindly favour. We have to bear in mind here that this capacity for work, which nature bestows upon embodied beings, can never succeed in inducing her to be kind to man, unless he uses her gift of power to serve other ends than his own selfish pleasure or advantage. The Supreme Person, who is the transcendental source and support of the visible universe, has made *prakṛiti* very potent and very capable of kindliness; only she has to be duly propitiated through the unceasing sacrifice of selfishness, if we desire to make her helpful to man's progress and emancipation from the bondage of matter. Nature gives us our power for work, and she produces also the fruit of our work. When the moral result of our work is worthy, it gives us more and more strength to do good work and enables us to draw more and more from nature all the useful and valuable fruits of work. But when our power for work is utilised in wrong ways, when what ought to be the means of encouraging unselfishness in us serves only to increase and strengthen selfishness, then we reap only such a reward as in no way makes us stronger or purer, or makes the community to which we belong happier or more prosperous. The wheel of nature which has been set in motion by the Presiding Power over nature, moves indeed in this fashion. The capacity for work, which embodied beings obtain from nature, must be utilised by them unselfishly; otherwise, nature herself will become unto them barren and unfruitful in respect of all the higher purposes of progressive moral life and enlightened advancement in civilisation. Therefore the idea underlying this doctrine of the efficacy of religious sacrifice ought to be easily enough intelligible from such an ethical standpoint. That sacrifices, as forming an important element in almost all early religions, have considerably helped the evolution of man's morality and unselfishness is a fact, which no good student of the history of religion can confidently contradict. Similarly, no philosophic student of the history of human civilisation can gainsay the great

fact that selfishness weakens in the long run the power of communities to serve as notable and effective agents of freedom and progress, while unselfishness and the heroism of self-sacrifice enable them to produce such enduring and elevating moral forces as will help on progress even after those communities have themselves disappeared from all the visible streams in the flowing procession of human history.

The theory that there are gods, that these are so pleased by the sacrifices, which their worshippers offer, as to give them plenty and prosperity in return, may not also appear to some to be literally true and acceptable. But even to them the main idea underlying these statements, if somewhat altered in expression, need not appear to be seriously objectionable. There seems to be no doubt that Śrī-Kṛishṇa believed in the reality of the gods, and considered that they in some manner controlled and guided the workings of nature. The invariable association, which no good student of history can fail to observe, between the true unselfishness of human communities on the one hand and their capacity for achieving progress on the other —such progress as is seen to be determined by the kind propitiousness of nature unto them—cannot certainly be conceived to be purely unguided and accidental. If there is design in nature, and if the philosophic student of history sees the finger of God guiding the destiny of the world and of civilisation towards that far off divine event to which the whole creation moves, the idea of Śrī-Kṛishṇa in regard to the Dēvas or gods cannot indeed be safely contradicted. Although modern science has a tendency, which appears to be in favour of upholding the view that the phenomenal universe of matter and energy is a self-sufficient whole in itself, still there is nothing in this science which contradicts the view that the operations of nature in this universe may yet be subject to some kind of conscious control and guidance from within or even from without. Anyhow, there can be no great uncertainty about the result of the whole of this discussion bearing on the moral meaning and value of sacrifices. Sacrifice as an institution of religion has been the first potent seed sown in the heart of civilisation for producing more and more the growth of lovely unselfishness therein; and it is through sacrifice offered in true faith by human communities that the gods became pleased with them and increased their moral potency and spiritual

freedom. It is this power, so acquired by man slowly in the course of the progress of civilisation, which has enabled him to-day to rise in thought to the sublime height of absolute unselfishness and complete spirituality, so that he may command from there the vision of the emancipated and transfigured soul, as it is in its own nature gloriously free and self-luminous. It is in understanding this that we have the key to the meaning of the statement that all work, which is intended to serve any purpose other than that of sacrifice, is calculated to give rise to the bondage of *karma.* I have already kept you too long. So let us here conclude our work for to-day.

XIV

On the last occasion we were dealing with the question of how it may become possible for man to do his duties in life without attachment to the results accruing therefrom, how it may become possible for him to live and to work and be at the same time free from creating for himself the bondage of *karma.* In the statement—यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः—we have the clue to understand how such a life of unattached duty and freedom from the bondage of *karma* may well be lived. The meaning of this statement is, as you already know, that all work, which is other than what is intended for a sacrifice, subjects the worker to the bondage of *karma.* In other words, only such work, as is really intended for the performance of *yajña*, is free from the defect of producing the sinful taint of *karma.* Here *yajña* need not necessarily mean a sacrifice; it may be any kind of work, which, taking the place of sacrifice, may serve as a means of divine worship. That Śrī-Kṛishṇa used this word in the general sense of an act of worship will become clear to us in the course of our study of the next chapter of the *Gītā.* Such an act may be either physical or mental, as we shall then be able to make out and learn. When we interpret *yajña* in this general sense of an act of divine worship, the idea, that all such work, as is of the nature of *yajña*, is incapable of imposing upon the soul the binding limitations of matter, becomes even more easily intelligible, than when we interpret that word to mean the ritual of sacrifice intended to propitiate some divine being in a certain prescribed manner. We have seen how, in the early ritualistic religion of sacrifices, the idea of duty associated with the performance of sacrifice is not in

itself so strong as to cause the total disappearance of the force of selfishness from the mind of the worshipper. In fact, in such a ritualistic religion, the motive of personal advantage is very generally at the root of the desire to worship and to propitiate the deity. It is only at a later stage in the development of the ideas and institutions underlying religion, that the duty-aspect of sacrifice becomes more prominent than its interest-aspect; and the subordination of its interest-aspect to the duty-aspect goes on increasing continuously in the history of religion, till at last all ideas of self-interest are made to vanish completely from the whole sphere of earnest religious worship, and duty alone is then seen to remain and to reign supreme. In the course of this development, other forms of religious worship than the ceremonial offering of sacrificial oblations become known and established; and these new forms are naturally less and less associated with considerations of self-interest, as they are evolved later and later in the history of religious progress. There can therefore be no doubt that all forms of religious worship are fitted, some more and some less, to enable people to learn how to live the life of the disinterested performance of duty. Let us here bear in mind that we have been further told that none of us can live a life which is wholly inactive, absolute passivity being impossible to us in the very nature of things. If we have all to work for the very reason that we have all to live, and if all work, other than what is done as an act of divine worship, is calculated to confirm and enforce the imprisonment of the soul in matter, the only way in which we may help our souls to become free and perfect, even as they are intrinsically in themselves, is in our doing all our obligatory duties in life as acts of divine worship. Thus a comprehensive understanding of the *ślōkas* that we studied in our last class leads us quite naturally to the conclusion that the whole of a man's life has to be lived and worked out by him, as though every thing that he does therein is really a part of a continuous and progressive series of acts directed to carry out obligatory divine worship. Śrī-Kṛishṇa has proved it abundantly in the *Gītā*, as we shall see by and by, that in the case of all persons to live well is indeed nothing other than to serve God and to worship God. To know this is to know the central secret of success in regard to the moral life; and to act it out is to make our journey sure along the path of selflessness to

the goal of self-realisation and God-attainment. Whoever lives his life otherwise, is emphatically like the servant, who, in caring selfishly for his own personal interests, necessarily betrays the interests of his very kind and loving master. In calling such a man by the name of a thief, there is surely no undeserved condemnation. But the man, whose whole life, with all its attendant duties, is an offering made unto God—what is he like? There can be no doubt that he serves his God rightly, and thus wins his salvation effectively. And if we wish to know how the living of such a life becomes more easily possible to him than to others, we have to understand the next *ślōka*, which shows how, in the case of such a man, selfishness itself becomes impossible.

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च सन्तुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥ १७ ॥

17. The man whose delight is wholly in his own self, and who is (accordingly) satisfied with himself and is altogether pleased within himself—to him there is nothing that has to be accomplished.

The Sanskrit word *ātman* generally means the same thing as *soul* or *self*. But it is also used frequently enough as a reflexive pronoun, and is capable of being translated as *himself* or *herself*. We have to understand here that the man, whose sole delight is in his own self, is indeed no other than the man, who is gladly engaged in the philosopher's endeavour of true self-realization, and has learnt well that his own happiness and misery are surely in no way dependent upon anything which is outside of himself. It cannot be denied that he, whose delight is wholly in himself, may also be understood to be a person, who is so selfishly self-centred as not at all to care for any one other than himself. Evidently this *ślōka* does not refer to this particular type of man as *ātmaratiḥ*. Although such a man may be satisfied with himself and be also pleased altogether within himself, it cannot be said of him that there is nothing for him to be gained in this world. Such a man has all things to gain and to accomplish for himself; otherwise he cannot be the self-centred selfish man that we have taken him to be. It is of the wise man

of complete contentment, who is thoroughly convinced that nothing, which is outside of himself, can ever happen to be to him the foundation of true and lasting pleasure or satisfaction or happiness—it is only of him that we may rightly say that he has nothing to win or to achieve for himself in this world. Let us now take into consideration the man, with whom to live is necessarily to serve and to worship God, and who thus does all his duties in life as acts of divine worship. The question is whether such a man will find any delight in the acquisition of external objects of enjoyment and feel that he has many things to accomplish and to gain, or whether he will be truly self-delighted so as to find all his joy and satisfaction in his own internal soul. The very statement of this question ought to be enough to enable us to make out its answer at once. To the man, to whom life is really of value only as a means of doing unselfish service and thus conducting divine worship, the object of life can never be the acquisition of power or pleasure for himself. Please take care to note that a person of this kind is in no way obliged either to be a misanthropic ascetic or to live a mere do-nothing life. His life is expected to be as vigorous and as full of activity as that of the energetically selfish man; only the purpose for which he lives and works has to be different from what it is in the case of the selfish man. In the case of the wise seer, work serves as the means of securing salvation through self-realisation and God-realisation; but in the case of the worldly man, the very selfishness of his work tends to strengthen more and more the bondage of his *karma*, so as to put off the day of his deliverance quite indefinitely. It is therefore clearly conceived in this *ślōka* that the man, who lives his life and works out well all its details with the firm conviction that everything he does is really service rendered unto God, becomes thereby capable of attaining self-realisation sooner or later; and it is only after the attainment of self-realisation in a more or less marked manner that one's delight in one's self becomes capable of making one wholly independent of all external objects of enjoyment. By adopting more and more the duty-aspect of life and by discarding more and more the interest-aspect thereof, we may all acquire the power to look upon the whole of our life as a means to serve and to worship God; and life lived with a pronounced tendency in favour of this conviction—that the life of human service and of

divine worship is alone the truly worthy life—is sure to be helpful to us in our endeavour to win self-realisation. The earnest practice of unselfishness, as guided and controlled by the untiring effort of the will, is a necessary condition precedent of self-realisation; and when this is attained, the continued practice of unselfishness becomes so perfectly natural and easy as to be quite spontaneous and as to make selfishness itself entirely impossible. It is then that we come to know of how little profit it is to us to gain the whole world, if thereby we lose our own soul. And the man who has acquired the power of self-realisation and is also able to appreciate its worth justly—such a man has in fact come into the possession of the worthiest and the most covetable thing in the world. All other things cease to have any value in his eyes. The immediate consequence of this is that in his case selfishness can no longer be the propelling motive of work. It is not that such a man either need not, or will not, do any work at all. He too is bound to work as all others are, and may be seen to be always ready to bear gladly his burden of duty with undisturbed cheerfulness. The difference between him and others of comparatively lower moral aims consists mainly in the high healthfulness of his mental atmosphere, which is completely cleared of all selfishness. Judged externally, the unselfish man blessed with such self-delight may look very much like the selfish man who has never even dreamt of any thing like self-realisation. We shall soon learn why it is that the external aspect of the life of the successful aspirant after self-realisation may often be similar to the external aspect of the life of the common man of the world. However, this *ślōka* makes it clear to us that the internal mental aspect of the successful aspirant's life is markedly different from that of the common man of the world.

नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।

न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥ १८ ॥

18. To him there is no object whatever to be gained by doing or by not-doing; and there is, among all the things existing (in this world), not one which is related to him as an object to be desired (by him).

We have to a large extent already anticipated the meaning of this *ślōka* in making out how, to a self-delighted and joyously self-contained aspirant after moral perfection and spiritual freedom, there can be indeed nothing that deserves to be won or achieved by him with motives of personal interest and advantage. To the man, who has become happy within himself through the great joy appertaining to true self-realisation, there can be no personal advantage of any kind to be gained by the doing of any interested work. It is a commonly observed fact of human life that the selfish man uniformly distinguishes the work which is advantageous to him from that which is not so; and utilising this distinction in his own life, he is apt to feel that fully as much is to be gained by the doing of the former kind of work as by the not-doing of the latter kind. We may thus see that the omission to do certain kinds of work is quite as apt to be selfishly useful to him as the commission of deeds which are suited to serve his own selfish ends; and such a man may gain what he holds to be advantageous, both by commission and by omission. But he who has come to know the totally unprofitable nature of the gain of even the whole world at the risk of having to lose the soul thereby, and who accordingly holds self-realisation in higher esteem than all kinds of pleasure and power and personal advantage—he gains nothing at all either by the commission of certain deeds or by the omission of certain others. If he works, it cannot be because he thereby hopes to benefit himself personally in a selfish way; and similarly, if he does not do any work, it cannot be because he feels that his abstention from work is in any manner calculated to serve his selfish ends. This kind of utter unselfishness and absolute indifference in relation to work as well as no-work becomes possible only in the case of the man, whose chief delight is all within himself, and whose aims and aspirations are not made to rest on anything which is outside of himself. Therefore nothing in the outer world can become related to him as an object worthy to be aimed at and striven for by him for attainment. In relation to him all the external objects in the world have no utility, and he consequently discards them quite freely and spontaneously. It becomes a part of his very nature to do so. This, however, does not mean that he is at liberty to live a passive do-nothing life. We have been already told fully emphatically that the living of such a life is altogether impossible in

this physical world of ours; and the consequence is that he also has to live a life of work. What kind of work he has to do in life, and how he has to do it, are in consequence taken up for consideration in the next *ślōka*.

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर ।
असक्तो ह्याचरन् कर्म परमाप्नोति पूरुषः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Therefore, always perform without attachment such work as has to be performed; for it is by the performance of work that the man, who is without attachment, attains unto the Supreme.

I need not tell you that the Supreme, which is here mentioned, denotes the Supreme God, and that the attainment of the Supreme means therefore the same thing as the attainment of God. We have already learnt enough of the *Gītā* to know that this attainment of God is the holy goal to be reached at the end of the journey on which our pilgrim soul has started. It is the final beatitude to which all true philosophy points, and for the attainment of which all saintliness strives knowingly and with enduring devotion. In other words, it is the same as the attainment of what we know by the name of *mōksha* in the language of Hinduism. To attain unto God is to rise altogether above the limitations of matter, to become so emancipated from all the limiting conditions of life in the physical world, as to be entirely unencumbered in securing self-realisation and God-realisation. The state of *mōksha* is in fact conceived to be that state wherein both these realisations occur naturally and as a matter of course. The soul, being then what it is in itself, comes to know itself as it is in itself; and in knowing itself as it is in itself, it comes to know its God also. Such being the case, we have to see why it is that even the disinterested man of no attachment to the fruits of work has to do work so long as he cares for the attainment of *mōksha*. Knowing, as we do, that the truly wise man, who is *ātmarati* and *ātmatṛipta*, does not at all make his bliss and happiness depend upon anything which is outside of himself, we may quite naturally but wrongly arrive at the conclusion that there is no harm if he does not do even such work as he is in duty bound

to do. It is true that such a person can have nothing to gain in the way of selfish advantage by the performance of any kind of work. This cannot certainly mean that he need do no work at all; absolute inaction is as impossible to him as it is to all others in this mundane world of ours. Nature has made it obligatory on him also to live a life of work; and such work as he is fitted for by nature, and as is therefore rightly imposed upon him as his duty, he cannot and ought not to decline to perform. If, nevertheless, he courts the impossible as well as improper life of passive inaction, he will thereby be hindering the accomplishment of his own salvation. We are told here that freedom from all selfish attachment is not in itself enough to enable one to attain unto God; while in possession of such freedom from attachment, one has to live the life of work, if one really wishes to attain salvation. You may remember how, on a former occasion, we made out that, if work creates the bondage of *karma*, it also helps to remove that bondage. Indeed, it is the unselfish performance of duty alone that can cause the removal of this bondage, and fit people for the attainment of salvation; and it is in this fact that we have the meaning of the 'therefore' with which this *ślōka* begins. To learn to look upon life as a means of serving God, and to do everything that we do in life as acts of divine worship, are conducive to the creation of unselfishness in us, and may thus help to produce in us the power for self-realisation and God-realisation. When, through the exercise of this power, unselfishness becomes perfected and fully established in our very nature, even then we have all to do the work that has to be done by us. The acquisition of that supreme internal soul-delight, whereby all external objects are made to appear as useless in themselves and altogether unattractive,—this certainly kills selfishness; but we have to see that, in doing so, it only tends to enhance the obligatoriness of the unattached and unselfish performance of duty. What kind of work it is, that has in this manner to be obligatorily done by us, will become clear as we proceed. We have now to take note of the fact that even the most unselfish seeker of salvation, who is happily well aware of how to gain his own soul, cannot safely discard the obligation of having to do his duty; for it is by doing his duty well that he may be enabled even to gain his own soul. How the active life of unselfish duty leads to the

attainment of salvation, is illustrated in the next *ślōka* by the example of a famous personage known to the history of ancient Hindu religious thought and life. And let us now take that illustrative example into consideration.

कर्मणैव हि संसिद्धिमास्थिता जनकादय: ।
लोकसंग्रहमेवापि संपश्यन् कर्तुमर्हसि ॥ २० ॥

20. Indeed, through work itself, Janaka and others (like him) obtained salvation. At least looking to the guidance and control of the world, it is proper for you to do (work).

What has been translated here as 'the guidance and control of the world' is the compound word *lōkasaṅgraha*. This word has been somewhat variously interpreted to mean the accomplishment of the good of the world, the control exercised on the world so as to prevent it from going astray, the inducement offered to the world so as to make it adopt the life which we consider to be good for it; and I have therefore thought that the full import of the word is best brought out by translating it here as 'the guidance and control of the world'. Nevertheless, it has to be remarked that, as brought out by a later (25) stanza in this same context, the expression *lōkasaṅgraha* really means taking the world along with one. The guidance and control of the world are of course implied in this. And now let it be observed that it is only the former half of this *ślōka* which is intended to illustrate, by means of an ancient historical example, the philosophical position that the attainment of the salvation of *mōksha* is possible only through the unselfish performance of duty. The latter half of the *ślōka* gives a further reason why it is necessary on the part of even the wisest and the most unselfish and soul-delighted aspirant to do well all such work as happens to be naturally obligatory on him as duty in relation to his position and qualifications in life. The Janaka, who is mentioned here as the best exemplar of the philosophic life of strenuous and unselfish duty, was one of a line of famous kings who ruled in Mithilā, all of whom bore the common title of *Janaka*. The word *janaka*

means *father* literally, and is known to be etymologically allied to the English word *king*. There is nothing strange in the conception of the king as the father of his people, and the *Vishṇu-Purāṇa* bears out the statement that in Mithilā there ruled a long line of Janakas from very ancient times, and that they were generally philosophic kings of high and noble character. My object in mentioning this to you now is to point out to you, that the Janaka who is referred to here was perhaps the father of Sītā, the famous heroine of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, but not that other Janaka, who is mentioned in the *Bṛihadāraṇyakōpanishad*, and in whose court flourished the great Yâjñavalkya, the founder of the new school of *Yajurvēda* known as the *Śukla-Yajurvēda*. Both these Janakas are well known to the ancient history of India; and it is the former of these, who went also by the name of Sīradhvaja, that is traditionally believed to have lived at a time earlier than the days of Śrī-Kṛishṇa. Even from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, in which this Janaka is mentioned only incidentally, we may make out that he must have been in his day famous for his saintly righteousness and strong sense of duty; and it is probably this same Janaka to whom Vasishṭha is said in the *Mahābhārata* to have taught divine wisdom. It has been pointed out that the possession of the divine wisdom, which is consequent upon self-realisation and God-realisation, made this Janaka so absolutely unselfish that, even as a king owning so many things and wielding authority over so many subjects, he felt that he had no title to call any one person or any one thing as his own. It is recorded that on one occasion, when he was all on a sudden told that his capital city of Mithilā was on fire, with the object of putting his unselfishness to practical test, he at once calmly declared—मिथिलायां प्रदग्धायां न मे किञ्चित् प्रणश्यति—"If Mithilā be consumed in fire, nothing that is mine would be lost". This statement of Janaka cannot be made to mean that he was indifferent to the loss or the suffering which others than himself might sustain through the fire. For, it is known that, when the dawning of divine wisdom on his mind made him realise instantly the vanity of all human ambition and endeavour, he too, like many an other in his situation, felt an immediate preference for the life of retirement and renunciation, but that on further thought he refrained from adopting it, and chose to live the active life of unselfish

duty. Accordingly, his life of action and endeavour and achievement was emphatically a life of service and helpfulness. How can such a man, bearing the sovereign responsibilities of a ruler of men, be indifferent to their loss or to their suffering? Human ambition and human endeavour are no more than mere vanity of vanities, so long as they are directed towards the attainment of purely selfish ends; but they become hallowed and helpful to the attainment of the highest good, as soon as they are turned into the service of man, which, as we shall soon learn, is the same as the service of God. Of this, Janaka was well convinced; and he therefore lived the life of the typical *karma-yōgin*. It is well to remember that we cannot be very certain about who the Janaka was, to whom Śrī-Kṛishṇa has referred as the typical *karma-yōgin*; he certainly must have been a Janaka that had become famous for his life of disinterested duty before the days of Śrī-Kṛishṇa.

Later examples are not unknown in the religious history of India—such as are equally well illustrativ of the ideal life of *karma-yōga*. Those of you that are familiar with the life-story of Gautama Buddha, for instance, may remember the description, which is generally given therein, of a very highly interesting scene under the famous Bodhi-tree, where, at last, after a long sustained and weary quest, wisdom dawned gradually upon his mind during the four watches of a certain night, so that by the morning he became fully enlightened. After Gautama thus became truly the Buddha, instantly the tempter Māra is said to have appeared once again before him to induce him to achieve at once his own *nirvāṇa* with the aid of the knowledge of truth and the consequent enlightenment which he had just then acquired. Immediately afterwards, when Gautama was on the point of unconsciously yielding to the tempter, the god Brahmā appeared before him and told him that he ought not to accomplish his own *nirvāṇa*, till he had made it possible for all the creatures in the world to become illumined by the light of his own enlightenment, so that they too might achieve their *nirvāṇa* in due time. Then Gautama at once regained the lost balance of his mind, and adopted the strenuous life of service, and went about for many years thereafter preaching wisdom and purity and incessantly doing good. This episode in the life of Buddha is truly symbolic of

the great struggle which almost all the saintly servants of mankind appear to have had to go through, in choosing between what may be called their self-salvation on the one hand and the service of humanity on the other. The temptation of Jesus by Satan as given in the *New Testament* of the *Bible* may also be taken to be illustrative of this great moral struggle; and I believe it is on record that Mahomed also went through some such struggle before he took upon himself the responsibilities of the messenger of God to man. These instances, that I have now mentioned, ought to be quite enough to show to us how universal this kind of heart-trial is, in the life of all those who have succeeded in the heroic endeavour of renouncing all selfishness to the extent of making their own salvation both certain and secure. It is out of the ashes of the lower self of sensuality and selfishness that the higher self of spiritual illumination and divine wisdom is born; and the birth of this higher self is invariably associated with a joyful feeling of self-contained delight and bliss, which is wholly non-cognisant of the utility of all outer things. This very natural non-recognition of the utility of outer things is the source from which the mental impulse in favour of resignation and inaction arises, and gives rise in the life of the very best of men to this kind of moral crisis and heart-trial, which it is never easy even for them to surmount. When they are under the influence of such a crisis, it is natural for them to feel a strong repugnance towards living any longer in this world of trouble and turmoil and temptations, and to wish to fly away, as early as possible, from it, so as to find enduring peace as well as joy in the sublime serenity of the soul unpolluted by material contact and untainted with sin. It cannot surely be hard for us to realise how such a wish is perfectly natural on the part of such persons. The immediate tendency of the emphatic recognition of the inutility of all outer things is to give a strong pessimistic colour to life in nature and in society. Therefore, to the man, who has won the treasure of self-realisation, the outer world and its activities are very often apt to be wholly unattractive; and his most prominent impulse then is certain to be in favour of absolute renunciation and passive non-achievement. However, this darkening mist of pessimism, which thus begins to sway his life, is in its very nature evanescent; for, as soon as he learns the great value and worthiness of divine and

human service, this mist of pessimism disappears from his mind leaving no trace of it at all behind. To the unselfish and truly wise servant of God, who knows that He is always served best by hearty service rendered unto His creatures, the outer world of human life can never have the character of inutility. The more he sees of ignorance and impurity, of sorrow and suffering, and of weakness and injustice in this outer world, the more does it appear to him to be a fit field for his labour of love. When the world is wholly egoistically viewed and judged, it will inevitably encourage the unamiable philosophy of pessimism ; but when it is viewed and judged altruistically as a world fitted for service, it at once becomes the home of hope and high optimism. The sorrow and the suffering and all the other discouraging pessimistic elements in the life of man and civilisation act as incentives to induce the unselfish saint to wear himself away in the loving service of God's creatures ; and from his vantage-ground of established unselfishness, he sees clearly what chastening and strengthening effect the sorrows and the sufferings of men have on their lives. He sees that their discipline is well calculated to do good to those who suffer from them, and that in relation to others they give the needed scope for the manifestation of love and benevolence, and for doing accordingly the work of succour and relief and the spread of enlightenment. Thus an alteration of the standpoint of our vision is enough to cause a cheeringly complete transfiguration in our philosophic comprehension of the universe and its purpose ; and from what we have already learnt from our study of the *Gītā*, we ought to be now in a position to see how the heavy and dolorous pessimism of Arjuna was due to the insufficiency of his inner light and the incompleteness of his unselfishness.

The great difficulty which so many earnest men feel in regard to the carrying out of what is real righteousness in conduct is in making the life of true renunciation fully compatible with the life of strenuous work. The more we work and achieve, the more intense is the force of our selfishness apt to become. Almost no worker among men really fails to feel that he is the agent of the work which he does ; and this idea of the worker's agency very naturally gives rise in him to the other idea that he has a right to be the owner of whatever is produced as the result of his work.

These two ideas are commonly denoted in Sanskrit by the two words *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*, which may respectively be translated into English as *i-ness* and *mine-ness*. It should not be difficult for us to make out that these ideas are at the very basis of all our selfishness, and that the temptation of the worker to be selfish is much stronger than that of the man who neither works nor achieves. An immediate consequence of this knowledge, that work and achievement are in themselves apt to induce and strengthen selfishness, is that many earnest seekers after the salvation of the soul are led to entertain the belief, that to retire from the responsibilities of life in society is the easiest as well as the surest way of securing the qualities of non-attachment and unselfishness, and that it is therefore better to run away from the turmoils and temptations of life, than to endeavour to overcome them courageously by means of a duly regulated life of conscious work and unselfish duty. To combine the strenuously laborious performance of duty with the spirit of complete renunciation is not therefore an easy matter at all; and Janaka is mentioned here as a particularly notable example of a person, who successfully achieved the really difficult combination of these two ordinarily incompatible characteristics in his own life. That, as a Kshattriya and a king, he must have found the achievement of this unique combination of ordinarily incompatible moral characteristics within himself more than usually hard, nobody can have the courage seriously to gainsay. Everywhere, it is well recognised that the king's duties are as onerous as his privileges are high; and hence it follows that his *i-ness* and *mine-ness* are, when he is inclined to be egoistic and selfish, apt to be more aggressively assertive and more sweepingly comprehensive than that of any other person who is not a king. Similarly we have to note that, when a king's more or less completely accomplished discipline of unselfishness and the consequent foretaste of the bliss of self-realisation lead him to look favourably on the life of renunciation and asceticism, it is not at all good for the state, of which he is the ruler, to encourage him to follow the bent of his mind in favour of resignation and retirement. Indeed there are some old writers in Sanskrit on politics, who are of opinion that no Kshattriya should be allowed to enter the order of *sannyāsins* so as thereby to become a mere mendicant ascetic. We should not forget here the great fact that war and conquest and assertion of authority

become very frequently the duty of Kshattriyas and kings—a duty which they cannot relinquish without jeopardising thereby the higher ends of human evolution in individual life as well as in the history of civilisation. Nor should we fail to understand that, when badly utilised, war and conquest and assertion of authority are apt to act as the most powerful incentives to the production of an unwholesomely aggressive form of selfishness in individuals as well as in communities. To have to do the duty, which, on our being unguarded even to the smallest degree, is apt to provoke selfishness in us with an irresistible force, is in no way a light burden of responsibility to bear; and whoever really bears such a burden successfully, without at the same time endangering his moral purity and spiritual progress, must certainly be a hero of a very high order. This Janaka evidently must have been such a hero. He surely must have known the imperious obligatoriness of duty so very well as to make his own life continuously full of strenuous action and endeavour. Side by side with this knowledge of the obligatoriness of duty, he was clearly in possession of the sincere conviction that he could have no title of ownership in relation to any of the results which might accrue from his work and labour. We may with a little thought see how this freedom of his from the feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* must have been the necessary correlative of his realised sense of the imperative obligatoriness of duty. We often hear people say that no man deserves any thanks for doing his duty. The underlying idea here is that, in doing his duty, he does only what he is bound to do. There is harm as well as discredit in the non-performance of duty. What is in Sanskrit called अकरणे प्रत्यवायः is ever the characteristic of duty. But there is no special merit or consideration, which he, who does his duty, may rightly claim on that account. Therefore, when our heart is not freed from the twin feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*, our realisation of the obligatoriness of duty is certain to be very imperfect; and a perfectly realised life of duty like that of Janaka must hence be free from the taint of selfishness completely. We may thus see how work in itself cannot cause the bondage of *karma*, but may very well serve as a truly efficient means of attaining *mōksha*. Indeed Janaka illustrates to us how, through the life of work and duty alone, the attainment of the highest bliss of soul-salvation becomes possible to all embodied beings.

Accordingly the life of work is helpful to the progress of society and civilisation, and it is also capable of leading the individual to the attainment of the highest bliss of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. Therefore even the wise philosopher with his true inner illumination cannot do away with work and with the discipline of duty. If, however, he adopts by mistake the life of inaction, holding that to be the true life of renunciation and unselfishness, he not only risks thereby the acquisition of his own salvation, but also sets a harmful example to weaker and less wise persons in society. The greater his internal illumination and philosophic unselfishness, the worse will be the harm of his example to others, when he adopts the life of inaction and passive resignation. Most of us, common men, find it exceedingly hard to distinguish between the inaction of the unselfish philosopher and the indolence of the unwilling worker. Moreover, the unceasing impulse to work and to produce is rarely, if at all, an inborn element in the nature of the generality of men. The commonest tendency among them is in favour of sloth, idleness and inaction; in other words, the large majority of men are *tāmasa* in their temperament. Men of *rājasa* temperament are, as you know, given to be aggressively active in seeking and winning pleasure as well as power. They are, in reality, born workers; and the very aggressiveness of their activity makes it hard for them to be disinterested and unselfish. Still we should never forget that work is superior to no-work. If, under these circumstances, the enlightened philosopher characterised by the *sāttvika* temperament discards selfishness, and in consequence declines to live the life of active fruitful work, are not the men of *tāmasa* temperament apt to justify their indolence and inertia by referring as an example to such a philosopher's life of inaction and non-achievement? The natural tendency of the common man to be inert and lazy is not the same thing as the tendency of the enlightened philosopher to be resigned and to withdraw from the busy activities of the world. The *tāmasa* drone and the *sāttvika* philosopher would look alike, if judged from the standpoint of their external behaviour, when the latter chooses freely to live the life of renunciation and non-achievement. To the philosopher himself the life of inaction and non-achievement may produce no harm. He is already in possession of that fruit of

discipline, which the disinterested performance of duty is alone able to produce. But the *tāmasa* type of persons whose life also is one of inaction and non-achievement, cannot afford to discard the highly valuable discipline of the life of strenuous work and sustained achievement. It cannot be denied that, if ever the *tāmasa* man works at all, he does so under very strong selfish impulses. Nevertheless, it is exceedingly necessary for him to do work, if he is ever to make any moral progress at all. I remember having mentioned once before in one of our classes that he, who cannot work and achieve, can never learn the lesson of sacrifice or unselfishness. Therefore, it is through the ardent performance of work that the selfish man is enabled to rise above his selfishness. In the common technical language of Sanskrit philosophy, the *tāmasa* man has to become *rājasa* before he can grow to be *sāttvika*; and when the morally perfected *sāttvika* philosopher of true wisdom sets by his conduct the example of the life of inaction and non-achievement, he thereby cuts at the very root of the moral advancement of the *tāmasa* type of people in society. Apart from causing moral harm to many individuals in this manner, the philosopher's life of inaction is further certain to make the production of the things, needed for the sustenance of life, inadequate for the proper upkeep of society and for the development of the common good. If the large body of ordinary men, who are not blessed with the internal illumination of the philosopher's wisdom, decline to labour and to do their duties in life, how can any society get on at all even physically? Therefore, for the purpose of setting a helpful example to the world, that is, for the purpose of guiding and controlling, by means of the example of his own conduct, the conduct and life of the large body of ordinary persons in society, the enlightened philosopher is bound to live the life of energetic action and ardent achievement. The philosophic king Janaka was actively engaged in carrying out all the duties pertaining to his position as a king, because he felt sure that he could win his salvation by living the life of duty, and because also he felt that, if he did not discharge his duties aright in life, he would be unpardonably disregarding the good of his subjects and setting a bad example for them to follow. That the ordinary man is only too prone to follow the example of the highly placed philosopher, naturally increases the burden of the

latter's responsibility for the welfare of society; and the next *śloka* tells us that most ordinary people in the world guide themselves by endeavouring to imitate the conduct of those who are generally understood to be great and worthy personages.

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेवेतरो जनः ।
स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥ २१ ॥

21. Whatever an eminent person does, that same thing the other persons (also do). What he makes his authority, that the world follows.

There seem to be two reasons as to why it is that men so readily follow the example of those who are known to them to be great and worthy. One of these is what is often disparagingly spoken of as the sheepishness of mankind. There is indeed in all men an amount of intellectual inertia, which makes it hard for them to be always willing to undergo readily the trouble of new and independent thought. Those who are willing and able to strike out a new path for themselves are surely very few in all walks of life. To move along old and well-trodden paths is therefore always very easy and attractive; for, in addition to saving us from the trouble of thought, it fortifies our sense of comfort by a tranquil feeling of security that certainly all is well with us. In striking out a new path, we can never avoid undergoing the trouble of rational and cautious and co-ordinated thought; and then there is also the fear that the new path may lead us from known and sufferable evils to unknown and insufferable evils. So long as it is not given to all men to possess the wisdom of the prophet or the philosopher, this unwillingness of theirs to strike out a new path for themselves is bound to be helpful to the cause of goodness and order in society; and hence it need not at all be characterised by the unnecessarily opprobrious designation of sheepishness. Tradition and custom generally contain in them the silently transmitted wisdom of generations of human experience. To rely on them entirely may often impede progress. Still none of us can harmlessly discard them altogether, however high our culture and freedom of thought may be. That so many of us learn conduct by imitation is therefore in no way wrong. There is

another reason which tends to make imitation really an excellent means of learning conduct; and that is to be found in man's innate instinct of hero-worship. It may not be quite easy to explain why it is that beauty and goodness have a unique power of impressing the human mind, so as to make it admire them heartily wherever they may be seen. Whether we are in a position to explain it or not, there is no doubt that to most, if not all, of us a thing of beauty is a joy for ever. The poet's power over the hearts of men and women is dependent upon this natural propensity of theirs to love and to admire beauty and goodness; otherwise he can neither please them nor instruct them. To some it has appeared that the very unaccountableness of this innate tendency of our nature to appreciate and enjoy all manifestations of beauty and goodness is a proof of both beauty and goodness being among the essential characteristics of the soul itself. Although we may not be able to associate the idea of goodness with everything that is beautiful—there can be no clear meaning in saying that a beautiful sunset, for instance, is morally good—still, we cannot dissociate the idea of beauty from all such things as happen to be really good. There is a beauty in goodness itself; and goodness is impossible without love and without sacrifice. Broadly speaking, the heroism which we admire in heroes may always be seen to be either the heroism of achievement or the heroism of sacrifice. And it has to be distinctly noted further that the former kind of heroism must have a noticeably large admixture of sacrifice in it before it can really command admiration and worship, while the latter kind of heroism—that of love and sacrifice and suffering—is in itself always able to command freely our admiration and to compel at once the homage of our heart. Accordingly, in our spontaneous admiration and generous worship of heroism, our natural and innate tendency to appreciate goodness is seen to assert itself. Therefore, the weaker man's propensity to imitate the conduct and behaviour of the stronger man, who is good and great enough to be looked upon as a hero, is not altogether due to what may be called intellectual inertia; on the other hand, we have often to see in it the free and artless manifestation of man's inborn love of goodness. Thus most people give more than ample credit to the greatness of the great man; and if any person, who is recognizedly great among his neighbours,

adopts the life of passive inaction, for the reason that, through action, there is nothing for him to gain as a selfish end, others, who are not great like him, and in whom the subjugation of selfishness is not yet fully effected, will nevertheless follow his example and guide their conduct by its authority. This imitation is unwholesome owing to the undoubted unsuitability of such conduct to such persons. Hence it is the duty of the great man always to see that his conduct is not only good in itself, but is also fit to be imitated even by those who are not great like himself. In the next *ślōka* Śrī-Kṛishṇa speaks of His own recognition of this duty in His own life as that of a man among men.

न मे पार्थास्ति कर्तव्यं त्रिषु लोकेषु किंचन ।
नानवाप्तमवाप्तव्यं वर्त एव च कर्मणि ॥ २२ ॥

22. In all the three worlds, O Arjuna, there is nothing that I have to do, nothing which I have not obtained and (yet) have to obtain; (still) I surely go on working.

To understand the full force of Śrī-Kṛishṇa thus illustrating the doctrine of the obligatoriness of duty and work in life by means of His own example, it is necessary for us to bear in mind that He was an incarnation of God and spoke as such to Arjuna, while delivering to him that ever memorable discourse which has become for us the priceless treasure of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. Otherwise, we are sure to fail to understand how His example is different from that of Janaka, and what particular point in the teaching His own example is intended to emphasise and enforce. The nature of divine incarnation and also the purpose for which God Himself becomes incarnate upon earth from time, to time we shall have to take up for consideration in the course of our study of the next chapter of the *Gītā*. Here it is enough for us to know the difference between an embodied soul, which owes its embodiment to its past *karma*, and the embodied God, who has, of His own free choice, elected to assume a material embodiment and to live as a man among men. In Sanskrit it would be right to speak of Janaka, as he lived on earth, as a *baddha-jīva*, that is, as a soul bound down to live in matter. In other words,

his soul was subject to the bondage of *karma*, and had to seek and obtain emancipation from that bondage as its highest object of attainment. When God becomes incarnate, there is no compelling power behind Him forcing Him to become embodied in matter. In relation to Him, embodiment really implies no bondage of *karma*; and His own *mōksha* or final emancipation from bondage is not therefore an object for which He has to strive. Thus he stands in no need of using the potentialities of His material embodiment for the purpose of enabling Himself to free Himself from any necessity of having to undergo the penalty of a future embodiment. Again in His case the various processes of common human psychology need not operate as they do in all men and women of the ordinary human type. Sensations and the associated physical feelings of pleasure and pain need not determine His will and His activities in the embodied life, in as much as He is intrinsically too great and too wise to feel really attracted by such pleasure or repelled by such pain. Therefore the pleasing objects of the senses cannot be among the things that He desires to seek and obtain. For this very reason there is no need for Him to undergo the discipline of self-restraint so as to obtain that self-mastery which the commonly human aspirant seeks. Indeed He is born with full self-mastery; and the physical and physiological tendencies of the embodiment have no compelling power of any kind over Him. There is, moreover, no personal advantage of any kind which He has to win for Himself. In our philosophic literature we find that, among the attributes of God, these two are mentioned as being noteworthy in particular, namely, His *satya-saṅkalpatva* and His *purṇakāmatva*. The former of these means that His *saṅkalpa* is always calculated to turn out *satya*, that is, that there is nothing which He wills that does not come out to be true. In other words, His will is law and fact in His universe. The other attribute means that His *kāma* is always *pūrṇa*, that is, that He has no unfulfilled desire. I am sure you see at once how these attributes are related to each other, and how the possession of the one necessarily implies the possession of the other. If to have no unfulfilled desire is considered to be logically an essential attribute of God, it cannot cease to be such an attribute of His, when He spontaneously assumes a material embodiment. Hence it is that Śrī-Kṛishṇa may well be said to have had nothing to do and nothing

to win and obtain. Like the weak man of no self-mastery, He need not have worked in search of pleasure or of power; nor did He need to work for the purpose of securing salvation like the purely human wise aspirant, who is anxious to rise above the bondage of *karma* and attain the salvation of his own soul. Although such is the natural relation of Him, who is an incarnation of God, to all work that embodied beings do in nature, still Śrī-Kṛishṇa went on doing work and living earnestly the true life of duty like any mortal man. Why did He do so? And His answer is—

यदि ह्यहं न वर्तेयं जातु कर्मण्यतन्द्रितः ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ २३ ॥
उत्सीदेयुरिमे लोका न कुर्यां कर्म चेदहम् ।
सङ्करस्य च कर्ता स्यामुपहन्यामिमाः प्रजाः ॥ २४ ॥

23. If I do not at any time, without indolence, engage myself in work, O Arjuna, (then) men on all sides will follow my path.

24. If I do not do work, these people (here) will come to grief. I shall become the creator of confusion and shall (thus) destroy all these people (in the world).

You remember how we have been already told that, whatever an exalted personage of notable eminence and worthiness does, is apt to be followed closely by all other persons of less worthiness and consequently of less eminence; and we have also seen how this tendency of people to imitate the behaviour of the great and the worthy does not deserve to be looked upon as altogether a mere weakness. It is natural that the greater the greatness of the exalted personage of eminence is, the greater will be the extent and force of the disposition among the less exalted to imitate him. We have thus to see that Śrī-Kṛishṇa's personal example was apt to be followed even more widely and more confidently than the example of Janaka. If Śrī-Kṛishṇa, being an incarnation of Him who is, as we have learnt, *satyasaṅkalpa* and *pūrṇakāma*, felt no need to do any work, either for the attainment of any unattained good here in this

world, or for the attainment of the soul's final freedom and salvation, and accordingly did no work at all in life, it could, of course, do Him no harm whatsoever. But such a course of passive inaction on the part of Śrī-Kṛishṇa would have clothed sloth, indolence, inaction and non-achievement in all the resplendent glory which belongs to a great ideal of life, and would have made all sorts of men and women look up to inaction and non-achievement as the surest means for the attainment of happiness and salvation. Now imagine the consequences of such a consecration or apotheosis of inaction and non-achievement. The very first consequence of it is that the people here will thereby come to grief. Who is there among us that does not know that the very existence of civilised society is dependent upon the produce of labour? When inaction is, either through teaching or through example, made to become the ideal of conduct to be adopted by all, then there cannot be much inducement in any society for any one to labour. When, as a consequence of this absence of inducement, labour itself lags behind, the produce of labour cannot surely be adequately forthcoming. The apotheosis of the life of inaction is thus apt to deprive society of the means of supplying its natural wants; it is certain to give rise to a slow but sure social suicide among mankind. How then is it at all possible for any people not to come to grief, when they are taught to cherish inaction and non-achievement as the supreme rule of life? Work and achievement often create as well as encourage selfishness; but inaction and non-achievement give rise to starvation and popular decay. The former condition, that is, the possibility of creating and encouraging selfishness, is not wholly incompatible with the requirements of progress in material as well as moral civilisation; but the latter condition of starvation and consequent popular decay brings death to the very root of all progressive life. To allow civilisation to be swallowed up in the yawning gulf of starvation is nothing short of making the very destiny of man become defeated.

But the apotheosis of inaction gives rise to other and even more formidable evils. The example of the great man's life of inaction not only makes most of the lesser men become inactive and unproductive drones, but also tends to encourage a spirit of lawlessness among those undeveloped persons in respect of the

conduct of life itself. It is only when duty is recognised to be obligatory, that the next question as to the proper choice of duty arises. When duty itself may be safely discarded, it does not matter what a man does, if indeed he does anything at all. Consequently, even if nature drives all such men and women, as have sincerely subscribed to the gospel of do-nothing inaction, to engage themselves in the performance of some kind of productive work, it is obvious that in a society, which is largely composed of such persons, there must be much want of harmony and regulated order. To believe in absolute inaction as the best means of attaining salvation is very much easier than to live even tolerably effectively the life of such absolute inaction. The apotheosis of inaction cannot therefore succeed in banishing all productive work and all labour from society and from civilisation; but it can certainly succeed in giving rise to disorder and confusion among workers, in regard to who is to do which work and how he has to do it. The old Hindu ideal of a well organised society is a political state which is subject to the authority of a strong and wise and righteous sovereign, who is himself subject to the guiding influence and control of religion. It is conceived that, without the exercise of political power by such a sovereign, the *yōga* and *kshēma* of no society can be secure. In other words, it is the organisation of a society into a state, that in reality ensures both progress and order therein. And it is declared in almost all Sanskrit writings bearing on the duties of a sovereign, that the chiefest among those duties of his is the maintenance of the *varṇāśramadharmas*. This Sanskrit expression is capable of being interpreted in general terms as the duties belonging to the various classes of the community as well as to the different stages in the life of the various members of those classes of the community. In speaking about the *varṇas* in society already, I remember having pointed out to you how the word *varṇa*, originally meaning colour, came to denote caste by race and birth, and how then it acquired the significance of caste by quality. There can be no doubt that the *Gītā* takes cognisance only of caste by quality, in all matters concerning human life and conduct in society, excepting perhaps marriage, in relation to which considerations of race and birth cannot be safely ignored in the interest of civilisation and moral progress. In any well orgnanised society, the nature of men's duties

must necessarily vary with the qualifications which they possess for the doing of duty. Otherwise social welfare itself is exceedingly apt to be endangered. Where we have soldiers without soldierly qualities, priests without culture, faith, self-restraint and purity, where the man of wisdom is made to do the functions of a mere physical labourer, and the mentally as well as morally unendowed dunce is placed in authority over affairs that concern the higher destiny of the community,—there surely things cannot be moving on either smoothly or in the direction of progress. We may take it for certain that to every society, in which there is such discordance between the worker's fitness and capacity on the one hand, and the nature of the work which he does on the other, it will become impossible very soon to move at all in the direction of progress. Moreover, in regard to the same individual we find that what he has to do as a boy is different from what he has to do as a man. The duties of boyhood, youth, manhood and old age are differentiated by nature herself; and it is this differentiation which is taken note of as *āśramadharmas* in Hindu law and politics. Where, for instance, boys are free to play the part of men, and men choose to play the part of boys, there also the true welfare of society is apt to be in ever imminent danger of disruption and decay. That before learning well the lessons of obedience, self-help and self-restraint, before acquiring knowledge and the power of accurate and connected thinking, and before experiencing what it really is to live for an ideal, which, at all events, is certainly other than pure selfishness, none can have any reasonable title to exercise the privileges of high manhood and responsible citizenship, is a proposition to which no thoughtful person can safely or sincerely decline to subscribe. Therefore the unconfused maintenance of the *varṇadharmas* is indeed just as necessary as the unconfused maintenance of the *āśramadharmas*. In planning out the discipline of social life, no state can afford to ignore the necessary differentiation of functions amongst its working members, due to the differences in their class-qualities as well as personal qualifications; nor is there any possibility of the development of social life and civilization becoming really valuable, without the aid of an appropriately disposed discipline due to, and maintained by, a duly diversified and well correlated system of education and training for

life. More need not be said here to show how fatal it is to social welfare to allow any room for what may be spoken of as 'confusion of duties,' that is, for *dharmasaṅkara*. And *dharmasaṅkara* is certain to be among the results of a great personage like Śrī-Kṛishṇa preaching the gospel of inaction and setting the example of the irresponsible life of non-achievement. Such a confusion of duties, as we have been thinking of, may very naturally lead, among other things, to the disorganisation of marriage-laws and other such social regulations, and may thus give rise to *varṇasaṅkara* also. We have already dealt with this question of the confusion of castes as caused by indiscriminate and unregulated marriage, and have been led to see that it is one of the most potent means of introducing decay into the very heart of progress and civilisation. Occasion shall not be wanting when we might have to refer to this question again. But now let us understand how true it is that, if Śrī-Kṛishṇa had not lived the life of work and duty, and had not also preached strongly in favour of action and achievement, a great confusion might have arisen in society in respect of men's duties and obligations, a confusion that would have tended to bring about the ruin of all progress and civilisation. It is to obviate, as He said, this undesirable culmination that Śrī-Kṛishṇa lived the life of work and duty, although in His own case such a life had not to serve the purpose of securing the *summum bonum* of salvation, as it evidently had to serve in the case of king Janaka. We should not fail to learn from this what great importance Śrī-Kṛishṇa attached to the duty of the service of man and also to the truly noble purpose of accomplishing thereby the gradual enlightenment and elevation of mankind. According to Him this work of loving human service requires to be esteemed as grander and more imperative than even the endeavour to attain the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. This will become clearer to us in our next class.

XV

In our last class we were dealing with the important question of why it is that, even in the case of persons like the well known royal saint Janaka, the life of work and labour is bound to be obligatory. It is one thing to say that the do-nothing life of passive quietism is impossible in the very nature of things; and it is quite

another thing to say that the active life of incessant duty is inevitably necessary for the material and moral welfare of society, even as it is necessary for perfecting step by step the character of the individual man, so as to fit him more and more for the attainment of moral purity and spiritual freedom. These two statements are again different from the statement that work in itself does not create the bondage of *karma*, as also from this other statement that it is not more possible for selfishly done work to create the bondage of *karma* than it is for disinterestedly done duty to help on the final emancipation of the soul from the limitations of material embodiment. We have seen further how all these various statements are strictly true, and how they together point out what it is that constitutes the secret of virtue and purity in regard to human life and conduct in society. Over and above these things, we have been told that even the sage of perfected character and pure wisdom, who has become so unselfishly good and so nobly worthy as to feel positively certain of his own spiritual emancipation, has to live the life of work and duty, at least for the purpose of setting a suitable example for others to follow. When unworthy and incapable men, whose character is markedly undeveloped, and who have yet to acquire the virile power of active and energetic unselfishness, adopt the life of inaction and renunciation, it is, as we have seen, sure to give rise to two dangers, which we may, for convenience, characterise as direct and indirect. The direct danger consists in that it tends to deprive society of its power to produce the very means of sustenance through which it has to live, thus giving rise to what may prove to be little short of social suicide through starvation. The indirect danger is intimately connected with this, and gives rise to that very serious kind of social and moral disorder which, being the result of the non-recognition of the obligatoriness of duty, is apt to undermine largely the power of self-restraint possessed by the members of any society, by making it possible and easy for them to believe that there can be no higher or more rational motive for work than what is due to immediate and unalloyed self-interest. We are all exceedingly prone by nature to mistake interest for reason; and any thing, which is calculated to encourage or justify such a mistake on our part, is certain to retard our moral progress and hinder our spiritual emancipation. The adoption of the life of absolute

in action by a saint or a seer may be quite harmless, in so far as that saint or seer of perfected wisdom and established character is himself concerned. But even the certainty of what may be called his self-salvation does not absolve him from the obligation of helping on others to obtain their salvation. This duty of service to others is considered to be so important that Śrī-Krishṇa Himself, though an incarnation of God, found its performance both worthy and inevitable. There is no reason at all why what I have spoken of as self-salvation should be in any way incompatible with service to fellow-men. On the other hand, kind and helpful human service is really one of the most efficient means of securing self-salvation. Moreover, it has been distinctly enjoined upon us that we should look upon the service of man as an end in itself, which even the certainty of our self-salvation cannot entitle us to ignore. Indeed the incarnation of God as man, has, as you will learn, the service of man for its object. Therefore the perfected man of wisdom should, in all that he thinks or says or does, always bear in mind what kind of life would be conducive to the moral progress and spiritual freedom of all those in whose midst he is privileged to live and labour. Love and service have always to be the motive of his work, even as selfish interest happens to be the motive of the work that most others do. Beyond this there can be no difference between him and others. And that is what we are told in the *ślōka* with which we begin our work to-day.

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत ।
कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चिकीर्षुर्लोकसंग्रहम् ॥ २५ ॥

25. In the manner in which unlearned men do work, (themselves) being (selfishly) attached to the work (they do), in that (same) manner should the learned man, who is desirous of taking the world (with him), do work, (himself) being (however) unattached.

In this *ślōka* the learned man is distinguished from the unlearned man by means of two marked characteristics. The *vidvān* or the learned man, as here conceived, is not a man of much book-learning

or a man of any very specially trained intellectual cleverness; he is, on the other hand, the man of true wisdom, who has learnt to distinguish the real from the unreal, and therefore unswervingly aims at moral perfection and spiritual emancipation as constituting the God-appointed goal of life. We have to bear in mind that, in consequence of his being such, he can surely have no interested attachment of any kind in relation to his work and its results, and that he is, nevertheless, prompted by the earnest desire to take the world with him as far as possible on the road of moral perfection and spiritual enlightenment and emancipation. His freedom from selfish attachment, and his desire to take the world along with him on the road of purity and progress, thus distinguish him from the unlearned man, who is selfishly attached to the work he does as well as to the results that accrue from that work. The selfishness of the unlearned man is enough to prevent him from bestowing any thought on the welfare or progress of others; and although he is thus unmindful of the good of others, the ardour of his selfishness makes him work vigorously for the attainment of the objects that he selfishly has in view for his own advantage. Dull drones who are intensely selfish at heart are not unknown in the life of society. They are the *tāmasa* type of men, whom we have had to take into consideration more than once already, and who abound in society more largely than it can afford to contain such without sustaining serious harm and inconvenience. The inert dullness of the *tāmasa* man may often be not enough to overpower his selfishness, so as to make it powerless to breed in him envy and attachment. Hence extreme selfishness and the inactive life of non-achievement may go well together, as there is no incompatibility of any kind between the inaction of the body and the impurity of the mind. This type of man is on the lowest moral plane, as we have already seen. And yet he is not the unlearned man whom this *ślōka* mentions. The unlearned man referred to herein is, on the other hand, the man whom his selfishness goads into energetic and aggressive action. I remember having drawn your attention to the fact that the life of energetic action and achievement is apt to create and strengthen in most men the selfishness that is born of *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*. Now we have to see that the reverse relation also holds true between selfishness and the life of work and achievement. If we take the

rājasa type of men into consideration, we notice that they do not suffer from any excessive inertia or dullness; no lazy unwillingness to work is to be found in their mental composition. They are ever alert and active; and in their case selfishness stimulates work and achievement, even as these in their turn stimulate and strengthen selfishness. Thus, in the case of some men, selfishness is capable of existing at the same time both in the condition of cause and in the condition of effect. The selfish attachment to work and things, which is given here as the characteristic of unlearned men, refers indeed to that causal force of selfishness which goads people on to action and to achievement. It is strictly true to say of such persons that the more intense their selfishness is, the greater is the ardour with which they live the life of work and achievement. Their devotion to the performance of work and duty is determined by the force of their selfish attachment to the results, which they expect to reap from the performance of work and duty; and when they are markedly selfish in this manner, it is natural for them to be energetic and active in performing work and in achieving results. Here, the learned man of true wisdom is called upon to live the life of work and duty with the same intensity of devotion to effort and achievement, as is manifested by unlearned and unwise men in their life of strenuous selfishness. The reason for this is, as you know already, to be found in the power which the example of the wise and learned person has on the conduct of the unwise and unlearned persons around him. He must use their natural proneness to imitate him and to rely upon his authority so as to enable them to win thereby the best and the worthiest advantage. This he can do, only if he leads them on to higher levels of moral perfection and spiritual power, so that they too may become able to acquire through the practice of unselfish duty more and more freedom from selfishness and from the bondage of *karma*. Mere inaction of itself cannot make the selfish man turn out to be truly unselfish, for unselfishness has also to be learnt by the incessant practice of work without attachment. If the wise and learned man lived the life of inaction and non-achievement, those around him might easily imitate his inaction and passivity; but they would not thereby succeed in acquiring his unselfishness. And yet there is no doubt that what they should imitate and acquire is pre-eminently his unselfishness. Accordingly

it becomes incumbent upon the learned man of accomplished wisdom to live earnestly the life of strenuous labour and unselfish duty; otherwise his life can be of no service to his fellow-men. The obligation of the wise man to serve and to enlighten those, who are unwise, is hence so great and so imperative that he can never hope to escape from it. The next *ślōka* clearly prohibits all desire and endeavour on the part of the wise man to escape from such an obligation.

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् ।
जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान् युक्तः समाचरन् ॥ २६ ॥

26. The learned man (of true wisdom) should not produce a change of disposition (in relation to work) in the minds of ignorant persons, who are attached (selfishly to work, but) should perform well all works, with due attention, and (thus) cause satisfaction (to them).

Before understanding fully the meaning and reasonableness of the injunction given in this *ślōka*, it is necessary for us to know that the wise man's duty of service to his fellow-men is looked upon in two different ways, although it is universally granted that the chief aim of that service must be to make the weaker and less wise persons become stronger and more wise, that is, to make them more and more capable of moral purity and spiritual freedom. There are some who hold that this aim is best carried out by coercing the weaker men to live at once the life which is suited for the stronger and wiser men. Because, in the case of the capable man of true wisdom, who has overcome all selfishness and is untainted by the love of pleasure or of power, the life of inaction and non-achievement may turn out to be not merely harmless but even helpful sometimes in so far as his own self-salvation is concerned, some people readily argue that such life must prove quite equally good in the case of all other persons also. What is, as they say, sauce for the goose must be sauce for the gander as well. This is one way of looking at the manner in which the wise

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man of high moral power and purity should discharge his duty of service to his fellow-men. You, however, know how very possible it is to argue on the other side also. The life, which is harmless or even specially helpful in the case of the learned man of true wisdom and established unselfishness, may very well prove harmful in the case of those who are devoid of that learning and wisdom and unselfishness. Śrī-Kṛishṇa seems to have been of opinion that to disturb the even course of the lives of common, uncultured and undisciplined men and women, who are not wise and capable enough to think out the nature as well as the details of the life which is best suited for their own moral development and spiritual progress, is in the long run unwholesome and productive of evil in relation to individuals as well as society. All life in society has necessarily to be an ordered life. The ordering of the life of men and women in society may, in some cases, possess a morally high value; and in some other cases, it may have a morally low value. No teacher of the philosophy of conduct will dare to contradict the statement that it should always be the chief aim of civilisation to improve the moral worthiness of human life. Nevertheless, it is the duty of the philosophic teacher of correct conduct to see that, in inducing and encouraging the change from the old order to the new, the love of orderliness itself is not wrecked on the rock of reform. There are also other difficulties in the way of such a teacher doing his work of social service without unconsciously causing harm. You may have heard it often said that doubt is the necessary precursor of all intelligent conviction either in religion or in philosophy. This is true only in the case of those with whom doubt never amounts to dismay. But we cannot forget the fact that there are many men and women in all societies, in whose case doubt at once gives rise to dismay and lands them in great uncertainty as to what is or is not right conduct. Doubt is always welcome so long as it is simply the necessary precursor of correct convictions. But where it unnerves men and women and hampers the ordered progress of their lives, it is bound to be harmful. Moreover, the creation of doubt in the minds of men is always easier than the quelling of that doubt by the force of a newer and more rational faith. Where the men happen to be ignorant and selfishly attached to work, the disturbance caused by doubt is very hard to be composed. In

respect of such men let me remind you of how we saw that, very often, in human societies selfishness acts as a check on selfishness, and keeps men and women in order within the bounds of an externally imposed restriction. When the majority of the members of any society are notably unselfish, what maintains order therein is more the power of the unselfishness possessed by those members than the compulsion of any external restraining force. The ideal of selfishness as checked and controlled by selfishness is very different from, and far inferior to, the ideal of self-restraint as reinforced by free self-sacrifice and love. It does not follow from this that all those, who are fitted by nature and by education to follow the former of these two ideals, may without harm be encouraged to lose faith in their egoistic ideal of life, before they are in a position to appreciate the sounder rationality and higher worthiness of the life of love and sacrifice, so as to adopt it with real gladness and with effective success. If any such loss of faith is encouraged in any manner, it means simply that even the lower ideal of ordered life is made to give way, and social anarchy is invited to undermine the very foundations of civilisation. Please be careful to note that this does not at all mean that there should be no impetus given to progress to enable men and communities to advance from the lower egoistic ideal of self-assertion to the more developed ideal of self-sacrifice and loving service. All that is intended to be pointed out here is that this advance has to be so slow and gradual, that the foothold on the immediately next higher step should invariably be made quite firm and secure before the support of the lower step is finally abandoned. The march of progress is nowhere abrupt in nature and can leap over no gulfs.

It follows as a matter of course from this that, in all our endeavour to preach religion and to teach morality and philosophy, we have not only to make sure of the truth and goodness of all that we teach and preach, but have also to pay special attention to the intellectual and moral capacity of those to whom our teachings and preachings are addressed. Incapable persons undertaking to follow a discipline of life, for which they are not yet fit, are sure to come to grief very soon. This fact has been long recognised in the religious history of India; and therefore Indian teachers of religion

have believed all along more in the toleration of differences than in the enforcement of uniformity. Buddhism offers a very remarkable instance of the recognition of the necessity to make due provision for weakness in relation to what has been conceived by it to be the ideal discipline of life. You know that both Hinduism and Buddhism believe in the helpfulness of asceticism as a means to attain freedom from the bondage of *karma*. It is understood that Buddhism maintains that one cannot attain *nirvāṇa*, unless one succeeds well in living the life of a *bhikshu*. Certain sects of Hinduism also are known to maintain that there is a very great religious and moral virtue in *sannyāsa*, and that without its aid the attainment of *mōksha* is impossible. In regard to the adoption of the life of *sannyāsa* by the aspirant, Buddhism, however, differs from Hinduism in a marked way, in that it allows the *bhikshu* to retrace his steps, if he finds that the self-restraint of *sannyāsa* is too much for him to practise. But in Hinduism the *sannyāsin*, who breaks down under the discipline of the required ascetic self-restraint and yields to temptations, becomes a *patita* or fallen man. The Buddhist *bhikshu* may revert to the life of the house-holder, with the hope that after further preparation he may, on a future occasion, be able to succeed better in commanding the power of self-control and renunciation. But among the Hindus, it is otherwise. If a man becomes a *sannyāsin* once, he has to be a *sannyāsin* for ever; or, he becomes a fallen man and ceases to be an honourable Hindu at all. We may rouse strong aspirations in favour of *sannyāsa* in the mind of a morally weak man; and the result of it may be that he, quite unconscious of his own weakness, too soon becomes a *sannyāsin* so far as external forms go. This hurried adoption of the life of ascetic renunciation and self-restraint may of itself immediately reveal to him how very unfit he is for such a life. Then, if he has no means of rectifying his mistake, he is apt to betray the very ideal of ascetic life and bring discredit upon himself as well as upon the institution of *sannyāsa*. Now is this desirable? I am sure you will all say that it is not. Nevertheless, we need not hold that the Buddhistic permission of reversion is better than the Hindu prevention of reversion. The Hindu idea seems to be that one ought not to be in too great a hurry to follow the ideal life of renunciation and self-restraint, before one has fairly made sure of

one's power to bear the trials and responsibilities of such a life well. But the Buddhistic idea obviously is to encourage always whatever tendency there may be in a man in favour of asceticism and self-denial, by allowing him to become a *bhikshu* as soon as he chooses, and permitting him at the same time to get away from the restrictions of ascetic life, whenever he finds himself to be too weak to live up to them. In both cases care is taken to see that there is as little as possible of the adoption of unsuitable life-ideals; in one case hurry is prevented by making reversion impossible, in the other case the untoward consequences of incautious hurry and inaptitude are allowed to be corrected as far as possible by reversion. The reason why I have here explained to you at some length the nature of the attitude of Buddhism and Hinduism towards the institution of *sannyāsa* is to impress upon you clearly that the fitness of the individual for the kind of life, which he is induced or instructed to live, should not be lost sight of by those, who have the high privilege of being religious and philosophic teachers among mankind. If, in conducting their work of teaching, they ignore the inherited endowment and natural capacity of the individual, they neither do him good nor help on the general acceptance and adoption of the teaching of such truth and goodness as have been realised by themselves in their own lives. On the other hand they may thereby do much harm by undermining the only possible foundation of social order and thus obstructing the progress of civilisation.

This naturally leads us to the consideration of what may be spoken of as the ethics of religious propagandism. Considerably long after the days of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, the history and civilisation of India have come to be acquainted with two new religions of foreign and extraneous development. These are Mahommedanism and Christianity. The temperament of these religions—to be more correct, the temperament of the followers of these religions—is very different from the temperament of the Hindus and of their Vedāntic religion in the matter of propagandism. Both Islam and Christianity are supposed to believe that it is possible for the whole world to become of one religion, and that it is only when mankind as a whole follows the flag of that one religion that the divine object of human enlightenment and man's spiritual emancipation

can be made to approach its accomplishment. Mahommedans hold that this one religion is bound to be Islam, and Christians maintain that it must be Christianity. We need not undertake the impossible task of ascertaining whose faith and hope in this respect are destined to prevail in the end, whether it is the Mussulman's hope and faith that will be crowned with success, or whether it is the Christian's hope and faith that will achieve the expected victory. It is in the blood of the Hindu, so to say, to believe that the whole world can never be really of one religion. So long as the inherited endowments of individuals and communities cannot be the same all over the world, so long also as their natural opportunities and environments are apt to vary from time to time as well as from place to place, it can be no more than a mere day dream to believe that the whole world will, in the end, be of one and the same religion. I have read of instances in which Christain missionaries from Europe are said to have taken charge of certain young persons belonging to certain savage tribes, to have given them European education, and to have brought them up for a number of years in the midst of Christian civilisation, in the hope that these Christianised and semi-Europeanised savages, when sent back to their kindred, would render to them loving service as missionaries of Christianity and of the ethics of European civilisation. It is said that, when these converted and educated savages went back to their home-land, they felt an irresistible impulse in favour of its savage life and gave up without any regret all the paraphernalia of European civilisation and all the restrictions of Christian religion and morality. One such instance is enough to show how hard it is to overcome or alter the inherited innate tendencies of men and women by means of preaching and teaching and educative discipline. Compare the Christianity of a person like Cardinal Newman with the Christianity of a Roman Catholic fisherman in South India. The religion professed by both these happens to be the same nominally. But can the similarity between them as Christians be ever more than merely nominal? Or compare the Christianity of some of our pious and highly cultured Protestant missionaries in India with the Christianity which the majority of their 'black flock' imbibe from them, and then say whether any thing like a real religious uniformity is possible in the necessarily multiform life of human civilisation. The harm here is not that it is simply

a striving after the attainment of the impossible. The striving injures more often than not the moral efficiency of those who are led to yield to its direct or indirect influences. It cuts them off from their old mooring, and does not land them safely on the new shore, to the more or less close neighbourhood of which they have been taken somehow. The generations, born in the interval between the decay of the old and the effective establishment of the new order, are therefore inevitably led to live a life of aimless drifting, in which neither external control nor internal self-restraint has any very considerable scope to operate. Is this sacrifice of social and moral equilibrium worth making for the achievement of a merely nominal religious uniformity? Again, the self-assertive tendency of the spirit of the propagandist is almost certain to endanger the unselfish detachment and sweet reasonableness of his own spiritually directed life of faith and love. Even in religious teaching, self-assertion on the part of the teacher gives rise to the decay of charity. He who feels that the religion of every other man than himself is untrue—such a man cannot at all be conceived to be in a happy frame of mind either intellectually or morally. Here is a sentence of Matthew Arnold's, which I shall quote with your permission, as it has a bearing on the question which we are now considering. It runs thus:—"We shall always appear insolent in the sight of a religion's adherents, so long as we look at it from the negative side only, and not on that attractive side by which they see it themselves". This sentence enables us to see that Matthew Arnold believed rightly that every religion has a positive attractive side and a negative unattractive side, and that the propagandist's natural tendency is to look more at the negative side of other religions than of his own. His partiality is even apt to make him quite blind to the negative side of his own religion. This is a clear case of common human weakness, which is not conductive either to the enlightened establishment or to the steady progress of true spirituality. Accordingly, excessive zeal in the direction of propagandism may well cause harm in more ways than one. Indeed such excessive zeal is very often the unconscious consequence of our obstinate non-recognition of the fact that, even in the sphere of religion, what is wholesome food for one man may well turn out to be poisonous stuff in the case of another.

Śrī-Krishṇa's teaching, as given here, does not however, seem to be intended merely to curb the excessive propagandistic zeal of the learned man of true wisdom and religious earnestness. Such a man is here asked to do nothing which may even indirectly induce others to look upon his spiritually detached life of renunciation as an example that may readily be imitated at once by all. Since the life, which in his case is quite rational and entirely harmless, and is also at the same time in full agreement with his realised wisdom and established unselfishness, cannot be either safely or advantageously lived by others, who are less qualified, he is asked to bring his own life down to their level, so as thereby to make their faith stronger in all that contributes to their love of order and of moral and material progress in their own level of life. Let us here see that in this there is no such thing as a compromise of conviction on the part of the man of true wisdom. Since he has wholly risen above all selfishness and can always command the spirit of absolute non-attachment, he may live the life of work quite as sincerely as the life of renunciation. If, in his case, there was the danger of the life of work contradicting his unselfishness, and if, nevertheless, he chose to live the selfish life of work, believing all the while in the obligatoriness of eradicating selfishness, he would be acting wrongly and thus compromising his conviction. We have already seen that such can never be his chosen course of life. Moreover, we shall learn soon that it is an essential part of the teachings of Śrī-Krishṇa that it is always possible for us to make our life be in the right, whatever may be the form of the faith that we adopt, and that what is right life at one stage of advancement in civilisation or in individual spiritual culture need not necessarily be such life at another stage, whether this be higher or lower. The only thing that has to be taken care of, at every stage of advancement in civilisation or in individual spiritual culture, for the purpose of making sure that life and conduct are therein directed aright, is to see that selfishness and sensuality are steadily discouraged at the same time that unselfishness and spirituality are encouraged throughout as far as possible. There is no doubt that the possibility of discouraging the two first mentioned undesirable qualities, as well as of encouraging the two next mentioned desirable qualities, varies from stage to stage in the continuous march of civilization and the

progressive advancement of individual moral culture and spiritual strength. Indeed, it is observable throughout the whole course of the history of civilisation that one of the chief aims of progress has obviously been to kill the ape and tiger in man so as to make his animality become more and more subservient to his humanity. In this march of progress there is therefore no stage in which this tendency, which is against selfishness and sensuality and in favour of unselfishness and spirituality, may be said to be totally absent. The advance here, as it has been well pointed out by the Swami Vivekananda, is in fact not at all from error to truth or from unrighteousness to righteousness, but from less completely realised truth and goodness to more completely realised truth and goodness. The learned man of true wisdom and spiritual insight and power and purity is therefore called upon to bear this great fact in mind in measuring the mental, moral and spiritual level of those who are less blessed with wisdom than he is himself. Indeed, if he is as wise as we have taken him to be, it is impossible for him to do otherwise. Consequently, it can never be rightly said of him, that, when by his conduct he encourages his less wise and less endowed neighbours to go on living well the life, for which they are best fitted by heredity and by training, he is thereby confirming them in error or is preventing them from rising to a higher level of purity and righteousness. On the other hand, the adoption of the teaching given by Śrī-Kṛishṇa here will surely enable him to help on the evolution of character in society by encouraging that evolution to move along easy natural lines. In a well trained mathematician of power teaching the multiplication table to those who do not know it, in a great linguistic scholar explaining the parts of speech to a class of young learners of grammar, or in a wise philosopher of notable piety and purity endeavouring to impart to his new and untrained disciples elementary lessons on the practice of self-restraint and mental concentration, we see nothing that is in any manner strange or incongruous. Every one of these teachers is surely doing the right thing in relation to those whom he wishes to educate and improve. If any of them did otherwise, and led the comparatively untrained and undeveloped persons to aim and work at what is really too hard for them, he would thereby be forfeiting his own title to be a teacher, quite as

much as he would endanger the progress of those whose lot it was to receive teaching at his hands. I do not see how the case of the teacher and exemplar of the spiritual life of purity and unselfishness can be conceived to be different from that of these other teachers. Therefore the life of work and duty, which is enjoined on the man of accomplished philosophic wisdom and unselfishness, can neither make his wisdom hollow and insincere, nor prevent those, whom his teaching and example are intended to influence, from rising to higher levels of moral and spiritual realisation. On the contrary, such a life, when lived by him, is sure to manifest his unselfishness in a very openly recognisable manner. And this prominent manifestation of unselfishness in association with the wise man's life of truly disinterested work and duty cannot fail to act as a wholesome example in relation to all those persons, who have of necessity to live a life of more or less interested work and duty. Since it is seen that what is good for self-salvation, in the case of the wise man of established spiritual power, may prove to be too good for common human service, and since it is also seen that what is good for the service of man is not at all bad for the salvation of the wise man, it cannot be anything other than right to enjoin on such a wise man that he ought not to create doubts and difficulties and confusing changes of conviction in the minds of those whose spiritual power is yet to be evolved and made to grow, but that he should help them to advance slowly and steadily in the direction of spiritual progress, by himself following the kind of life which is really good for them and their advancement. Let us now see why the manifestation of unselfishness is calculated to be more prominent in association with the wise man's life of work and duty than in association with such a life lived by others.

प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ २७ ॥
तत्त्ववित्तु महाबाहो गुणकर्मविभागयोः ।
गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते ॥ २८ ॥
प्रकृतेर्गुणसंम्मूढाः सज्जन्ते गुणकर्मसु ।
तानकृत्स्नविदो मन्दान् कृत्स्नविन्न विचालयेत् ॥ २९ ॥

27. Deeds are being universally done through the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*. He, whose nature is deluded by the feeling of i-ness, (he) thinks—'I am the doer'.

28. But, O mighty-armed Arjuna, he who knows the (correlated) distinctions among 'qualities' and actions, (he) does not become (thus) attached (to deeds), because he understands that 'qualities' operate in relation to 'qualities'.

29. Those, who are ignorant in regard to the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*, (they) become attached to the deeds which are determined by the 'qualities'. Let him not, who knows the whole, cause those, who are dull and do not know the whole, to waver.

We have already learnt that the distinction between *purusha* and *prakṛiti* is much like the distinction between 'mind' and 'matter', as expressed in the philosophical terminology current in the English language; and we know further that *prakṛiti* is translatable also as 'nature' and *purusha* as 'soul.' We are told here that *prakṛiti* has certain *guṇas* or qualities as its essential characteristics, and that these qualities are really responsible for all the evolutionary as well as dissolutionary activities which are seen to go on in nature. It is conceived that, but for these qualities, which are, as you know, designated as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, there can be no activity in nature and no possibility of performing work. Let us remember that every person here on earth is an embodied soul, that in his or her composition we find therefore both *prakṛiti* and *purusha*, and that, when he or she works, it is really the embodiment that does the work. If the power of doing work, which the matter of the body thus exhibits, is due to the qualities of *prakṛiti*, it follows as a consequence that the soul itself can never be the agent of the work which the *prakṛiti* of the body and its *guṇas* do. Nevertheless, men in general do not understand the distinction between *prakṛiti* and *purusha*; and even when they understand it more or less, they do not always bear it in mind. The result is that they very often mistake the body for the soul, as it is commonly mentioned in

Sanskrit writings, and hold the soul to be the agent of the work which the body does in reality. Such is the blinding power of their undiscerning feeling of i-ness. I wish to remind you, in this connection, that we have been already told in a previous *ślōka*, that all men are inevitably compelled by the *guṇas* of *prakṛiti* to perform work; for, we may understand therefrom that what really impels our activities is the need to satisfy the natural or the imagined requirements of the body. In fact all the work that people do, and all the activities which they exhibit, are after all physical and physiological. One of the ways in which European philosophy distinguishes mind from matter is by pointing out that matter is characterised by extension, while mind is not so characterised. The *Gītā* has already taught us that the soul is, in its essence, above the limitations of time and space. And modern science has fairly satisfactorily demonstrated that the physical universe of matter and energy may be looked upon as a fully self-sufficient whole in itself, seeing that every effect therein is capable of being accounted for by means of causes which are not extraneous to it. These various ways of looking at mind and matter are all distinctly calculated to show to us that the multiform activities of people, the motives which impel those activities, and the appetites which are satisfied by the results of those activities, are all things which belong to the body, but not at all to the soul. It cannot certainly be difficult in these days of scientific advancement to see that human activities have all of necessity to be physical in nature, and have also to serve certain physiological ends. I have heard it said that the greatest and the most powerful of all motive-forces in society is the force of hunger. Whether we consider the force of hunger to be the most powerful or not, there is no denying that a very large part of the activities of mankind is impelled by motives which more or less directly aim at the satisfaction of this ever urgent appetite. This animal appetite of hunger is entirely dependent upon the nature of matter and energy, as they are found in the constitution of animal embodiments. The energy required for the performance of the work of life is derived from the oxidation of the tissues; and to make up for the wear and tear of tissues caused by this oxidation, the system demands food and has to be supplied with it. Hence hunger has no connection with the soul, but is entirely dependent upon the purely physiological

life of the body. All our animal appetites are in this manner unconnected with the soul, and it is the felt need for their satisfaction that generally gives rise to that strangely tangled manifestation of motives, which actuate men and women in society in so many ways to do work and to achieve results. Therefore the deeds that all persons do are really impelled by the qualities of the *prakṛiti*, and are done in obedience to the needs and the natural tendencies that are felt by them in relation to their own embodiments.

Now let us try to make sure of the nature of the *ego* which is denoted by the word 'I'. This *ego*, which is denoted by the word 'I', is commonly spoken of in Sanskrit as *ahampadārtha*. Almost the very first philosophic lesson in respect of conduct and duty, which Śrī-Kṛishṇa is known to have given to Arjuna, is that which relates to the essential nature of this *ego*. I am sure you remember how in *ślōka* after *ślōka* the true nature of the soul has been step by step distinguished from that of the body, and how the *ego*, that is, the *aham*, has been shown to be the immaterial, immutable and immortal soul, but not the material, mutable and mortal body. Although in this manner, the 'I' of every one of us means our inner principle of consciousness, which we call the soul, and although, as explained just now, all our work is impelled by the 'qualities' of the *prakṛiti* in obedience to our physical and physiological needs and tendencies, still those among us cannot indeed be many, who do not, at any time, feel that they are themselves the agents of the work which in fact their bodies do. Thus, most of us impose the agency, which really belongs to the *prakṛiti* of our bodies, upon the soul, and hence become subject to the deluding feeling of i-ness in relation to work. The truth in regard to the agency of work, however, is to be found in the relation between the nature of the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* on the one hand, and the nature of the work that is done on the other. The work, which is propelled by the *sattva-guṇa* and is done in obedience to the natural needs and tendencies of a body which is predominantly *sāttvika*, is necessarily different from what is done under the impulse of, and in obedience to, the needs and tendencies caused by any other *guṇa*. Similarly the manner in which the *rajō-guṇa* or the *tamō-guṇa* impels action is, as made out by the kind of action which it impels, different from

that of the two other *guṇas*. Therefore, the innumerable differences, which we observe in relation to the various ways in which men and women live their lives in society, are all due to the differences in their respective constitutional needs and tendencies, as determined by the 'qualities' of the *prakṛiti* which makes up their embodiments. The predominance of a particular 'quality' of the *prakṛiti* in an individual's embodiment impels that individual to perform particular kinds of work. Thus the very nature of all our life-activities is determined by the 'qualities' of the *prakṛiti*, so that particular kinds of these activities are correlated to particular qualities of the *prakṛiti*. To know well all the various details in regard to the manner of this correlation is to know the distinctions among 'qualities' and 'actions'; and this knowledge will enable us to see how any activity, which is impelled by any one of the three *guṇas* of *prakṛiti*, may itself be said to be characteris d by that particular *guṇa*. As a matter of fact we may find that, as it is shown in the last chapter of the *Gītā*, all our life-activities are fit to be classified under three heads as *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa*. In this way we may easily understand how very right it is on our part to say that the *guṇa* or quality of the work that we do is determined by the *guṇa* or quality of the *prakṛiti* which makes up our embodiments. The *guṇa* of the *prakṛiti* is the impelling cause in relation to the life-activities of all living beings; similarly the *guṇa* of every one of their activities is an effect produced by that same impelling cause. It must be evident to you from this how it is that 'qualities' operate in relation to 'qualities'. And he, who knows this, can never fail to be aware that his true *ahampadārtha* or *ego*, that is, his soul, is not the agent of the work which is impelled as well as executed by the *prakṛiti* of his body. In other words, he cannot consistently become selfishly attached to the deeds that he does. But in the case of those, who are not aware that life's activities are, in relation to all living beings, impelled by the 'qualities' of that same *prakṛiti*, which is known to make up their embodiments,—in their case, selfish attachment to deeds is quite easy, as they, through ignorance, mistake the deeds, which are really determined by the 'qualities' of their *prakṛiti*, to be the result of the will-directed activity of their souls. It is worthy of note that persons such as these, who bestow wrongly the attribute of agency on the soul, are here spoken of as those who

do not know the whole truth in regard to where the real agency of their life-activities lies. Similarly those, who, after realising fully that 'qualities' operate in relation to 'qualities', have arrived at the conclusion that their soul is no agent of any kind in relation to their life-activities, and have freed themselves well from the moral impediments of i-ness and mine-ness,—these are spoken of as the persons who know the whole truth. This justifies the remark which I made a little while ago, that, in so far as religious and moral progress in society and in the history of civilisation everywhere is concerned, the onward march of mankind is never from error to truth, but always from less completely realised truth to more completely realised truth. To know that Śrī-Kṛishṇa understood and appreciated the religious as well as the moral progress of humanity in this light cannot but prove a source of very pleasing satisfaction to all impartial students of comparative religion, although their satisfaction may not be wholly free from a feeling of surprise. Some men are not, somehow, willing to grant that after all intuition may lead to the discovery of truth at least as effectively as observation and classification and generalisation do. To most of us the importance of knowing this aspect of religious progress consists in that it enables us to understand the rational foundation of the obligatoriness of charity and toleration and loving helpfulness in all our religious relations with all our fellow-beings. And surely there cannot be much charity or toleration or loving helpfulness in making the weak waver in their weakness.

Let us now see how far Arjuna's question, as stated at the very commencement of this chapter, has really been answered. "O Kṛishṇa, if the disposition of the mind is considered by You to be superior to work, then why do You order me, O Kṛishṇa, to do work which is cruel?"—this, you know, is that question. If Śri-Kṛishṇa's declaration of the superiority of the disposition of the mind to the work means that, when one takes care of the motive, the work will take care of itself, then a life of good intentions and pure motives is ever bound to be a life of perfection, although no result of any kind may happen to be achieved in it through work. In such a case, it ought not to matter much whether a soldier in the battle-field fights bravely and does his duty, or whether he goes away from the

battle-field not doing his duty therein, provided that his motives are as excellent when he goes away, as they have to be when he fights heroically. This is of course a wrong view to hold; the superiority of motive and mental disposition in comparison with work and duty does not entitle any person to elect and adopt the life of inaction, howsoever excellent his motives and intentions may be in doing so. The possible choice that people have in life is only between work which is associated with the proper mental disposition, and work the associated disposition in relation to which is clearly other than proper. Moreover the very rectification of the mental disposition in relation to the work that people do in life is almost entirely dependent upon the discipline due to the appropriate performance of suitable work. Therefore there ought to be no misconception and no doubt at all as to the necessity of doing duty and living the life of work and achievement. Even those, who are already blessed with a thoroughly pure mental disposition and find it absolutely impossible to indulge in any form of unrighteousness, have to live the life of work; because such active life is in their case also as much compelled by nature as in the case of others, and because again they, as typical exemplars of the truly righteous life, cannot control and guide the life-activities of others, who are not as fortunate as themselves, except by living the life of earnest and strenuous duty. There is another misconception also in this question of Arjuna; and that is in relation to the problem of our choice of work, after we have rightly made up our minds to live the life of action and achievement. By asking Śrī-Kṛishṇa why He ordered him to do work, which was cruel, Arjuna made it evident that he felt that, even if the life of work and duty was inevitable, there was no reason why he should be prevented from choosing such work or such duty as was pleasant and agreeable to him. Unless the doer of duty thinks that he is himself in reality the agent of the work he does, there is no reason why he should at all feel any repulsion in relation to any duty which he may be called upon to do. But for the selfishness, which is aroused in him through the feeling of i-ness, no man can experience either attraction or repulsion in relation to the duties of his life. Hence an undue reliance on the misguiding feeling of i-ness is the basis of the second misconception underlying the question put by Arjuna. His third misconception consisted in that he had not learnt

that there could be no optionality in relation to duty, the essentially obligatory nature of which really meant that it was determined for him by causes other than his own free choice as induced by his likes and dislikes. The portion of the third chapter, which we have already gone through, has effectively exploded both the first and the second of these misconceptions, by demonstrating that, in life, 'qualities' operate in relation to 'qualities', and that the *quality-less* soul cannot be the agent of the *quality-ful* work. The third misconception will come up for disposal very soon. But before we begin to study that, we have to understand the nature as well as the value of an additional means which Śrī-Kṛishṇa placed at the disposal of Arjuna to enable him to get rid of the misguiding feeling of *i-ness* in relation to work and all its results. That additional means is thus pointed out in the next *ślōka* :—

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि सन्न्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्व विगतज्वरः ॥ ३० ॥

30. With a mind fixed on (accomplishing the good of) the soul, make over all work unto Me, and become free from desire and from the selfish idea of ownership, and then fight without the fever (of doubt and anxiety).

In this *ślōka* the compound word *adhyātmachētas* has been explained by a well known commentator as *ātmani yat chētas tat*, that is, as that *chētas* or mind which is fixed on *ātman* or the soul. It must be understood that such a mind is necessarily unworldly and spiritually inclined, and that he who possesses it is naturally more anxious to seek the salvation of the soul than to secure any of the worldly objects of pleasure or of power. Here it seems to be clearly implied that the possession of the mind, which is mainly fixed on accomplishing the good of the soul, is a necessary condition to enable a man to make over all his works unto God and thus become free from desire and from all its selfish promptings. It is of course worthy of note that in this *ślōka* also Śrī-Kṛishṇa is represented to have spoken of Himself as God. You may remember

how we learnt, when we were studying the latter part of the second chapter of the *Gītā*, that to meditate upon God as the highest object of attainment is one cf the appropriate means whereby a man may become a *sthita-prajña* or the sage of steady wisdom. The justification for such meditation is to be found not only in the fact that it is quite capable of producing the desired steady wisdom, but also in the truthfulness of the religious and philosophic position that man can have no higher object of attainment than God. The injunction to make over all works unto God is also capable of a double justification in this same manner. The chief idea involved in this injunction is that, when men do whatever happens to be their work in life, they should not look upon themselves as the agents of such work, but should look upon God as the real doer of it. When men do their work in life as well as it ought to be done, and at the same time feel sincerely at heart that all that they do is really done by God,—it is then that they make over their work unto God. The making over of all works unto God, as it is enjoined here, cannot mean any thing other than the making over of all our assumed agential rights and responsibilities unto Him, so that we may sincerely feel that we are mere instruments in His hand to do His will; for, we can never be so passive as to free ourselves from the obligation of having to do our duties both earnestly and well. The manner of combining the performance of work and duty, with the acknowledged recognition of God as the real and ultimate agent of all such performance, is very effective as a means to do away with man's much too common feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* in relation to work and its results. There cannot be any doubt as to this. Moreover, it is so true in itself that every work that is done by any being in this world is ultimately done by God Himself; for, as we shall distinctly learn hereafter, He is seated near the heart of all beings as their Lord and makes them live and move by means of His own wonderful power. In fact it is in Him and through Him that we have our very being. Therefore none of us can have any title to look upon ourselves as the agents of the work we do, so long as it happens to be a well established truth that all beings in the world derive their very capacity to do work from God, who is the source of all power and the support of all life. Such is the double justification of this

injunction given to Arjuna that he should make over all works unto God, from whom alone all beings in the universe derive all their power to live as well as to labour. The undeniable truthfulness of the position, that God is in reality the agent of all the works that all the beings in His universe do, cannot in any manner affect injuriously the truthfulness of the other position, that all beings are impelled by their *prakṛiti* or physical nature to do work, and that in the doing of work the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* so operate as to give rise to the 'qualities' of work. The 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* are in fact the immediate impellers of work in the life of all embodied beings, and God is the ultimate source whence even *prakṛiti* derives her power to impel work and to produce results. Hence *prakṛiti* also is simply an instrument which God wields in His hands. He is Himself responsible for this instrument being what it is, as also for the work that it impels and performs. An appropriate illustration used occasionally in Sanskrit writings may be given here to show to you how *prakṛiti* may well be looked upon as a mere instrument in the hands of God. Imagine a woodman cutting a tree with an axe. The work of cutting may be said to be performed by the axe; it may also be said to be performed by the woodman. Both the statements are equally true, and neither of them contradicts the other. Under the operation of the axe as directed by the woodman the tree is cut, and it then falls down. May the tree say—'I cut myself, and I fell of myself?' The agency in relation to these acts of cutting and falling does not and cannot surely belong to the tree. It may be attributed to the axe, if, for the time being, we ignore that it is a mere instrument. The real agent here is of course the woodman. Exactly so is it also in the case of our life of work and duty. The 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* are the immediate agents in relation to all our activities, and God Himself is the ultimate agent. Thus the quality-characterised *prakṛiti* as the immediate agent is necessarily an instrument in the hands of God who is undoubtedly the ultimate agent of all work.

Accordingly, we see that it is possible for us to come to know the unreasonableness of our feeling of *i-ness* in relation to our work and our achievements, by realising either that all our activities are impelled as well as fulfilled by *prakṛiti* as the immediate agent, or

by attributing their origination and fulfilment wholly to the wonderful power which is owned by God, who is in fact the ultimate agent in relation to all the activities that go on in this universe of matter and energy. Indeed, as an aid to enable us to get rid of our unreasonable feeling of *i-ness* and all its unfavourable consequences, *prakṛiti* cannot be of so much value; for we cannot direct our devotion to *prakṛiti*, nor can we look upon *prakṛiti* as our highest object of attainment. It is God alone who is quite instinctively made out to be worthy of worship and devotion; hence it is easier and more natural to lean on Him and to make over all works to Him, than to rely upon *prakṛiti*, in our endeavour to get rid of the spiritually unwholesome and also logically unfounded feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*. The intellectual conviction, that we are not in truth the agents of the work we do, cannot of itself prevent well the growth of selfishness in the lives of most of us. And who does not know among us that the power of the head in moulding character is incomparably weaker than the power of the heart? Our intellectual convictions have to be, as it were, heated within the crucible of our heart, before they acquire the power to burn away the impure and unhealthy tendencies of our nature. If we bear this in mind, we may easily make out why Śrī-Kṛishṇa called upon Arjuna to make over all works unto Him, and yet go on with the duty of fighting in the war. How helpful it is to us weak people to feel firmly at heart that, whenever we are doing our duties, we are in fact doing the work of God in accordance with His will! And this feeling, be it noted, rests entirely on truth.

The command to fight, which is given in this *ślōka*, indicates as before that a line of reasoning is concluded here in the dialogue between Śrī-Kṛishṇa and Arjuna in connection with the topic they had under discussion. The teaching here relates to the clearing of Arjuna's misconception regarding the statement that, in so far as the production or otherwise of sin and of the bondage of *karma* is concerned, the motive with which a man does his work is a much more serious cause than the work itself, and that the same work may or may not give rise to sin according as it is done with evil and inappropriate or with noble and unselfish motives. This established superiority of the motive to the work has been shown to be utterly incompetent to over-ride the obligatoriness of work and duty in life;

and the conviction is untenable that they are in reality optional. To take care of the motives well and at the same time to ignore work and duty altogether have been shown to be both impossible and injurious. Thus the only course which is open to the aspirant is to live the life of work and duty, making sure all the while that his motives are positively pure and unselfish. Even then the question of having to do unpleasant and disagreeable duties has to be finally solved. That there is an obligatoriness in respect of the doing of such duties also is what Śrī-Kṛishṇa appears to have distinctly taught. And from His teaching on this subject, so far as we have studied it now, we may gather that He was evidently of opinion that whatever is helpful as a means in correcting the impurity and counteracting the selfishness in the motive of the worker, cannot but be helpful also in clearing away the mal-odour of unpleasantness or disagreeableness from the sacred field of true duty and loving service. To know that the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* are correspondingly related to the 'qualities' of the work that they impel in us, is really to know how our duties are determined for us in life. The manner of this determination, we shall try to understand more fully in the course of our next class. Now let us remember how the knowledge of the operation of the *guṇas* of *prakṛiti* in relation to the *guṇas* of work, and the knowledge also of the all-pervading agency of the power of God in relation to life and work in the universe, are together potent enough to deal the death-blow to man's feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*. Simultaneously with the death of these morally unwholesome feelings, man's motives of action are bound to become spontaneously pure and unselfish; and the ascendancy of purity and unselfishness in relation to his motive is bound to make it impossible for him to associate the idea of unpleasantness or disagreeableness with the dutifulness of duty. He, who has been able to realise fully the obligatoriness of duty, cannot fail to discern a lurking contradiction in terms, whenever men speak of any duty as being pleasant or unpleasant. Having disposed of Arjuna's doubts and difficulties thus, Śrī-Kṛishṇa called upon him to fight like a true hero and warrior. Śrī-Krishna's estimation of the great value of the relation of faith to duty happens to be the next subject for our study and consideration. Let us reserve it for the next class and conclude here our work for to-day.

XVI

In our last class we saw how Śrī-Kṛishṇa tried to clear away some of the doubts and difficulties which Arjuna felt in regard to the relative importance of motive and duty. The necessity of absolute unselfishness in relation to motive is due to its being the sole determining factor in the production or otherwise of the bondage of *karma ;* and since the mere command of unselfish motive can in no way remove from us our burden of obligatory duty, we have to combine in our lives the effective performance of work and duty with complete disinterestedness of purpose. So far as the quality of the motive is concerned, the moral aspirant after perfection and purity has no option to choose between selfishness and unselfishness as he likes. His motive has always to be disinterested and unselfish. In the manner in which there is no room for choice in relation to the quality of the motive, there is also no room for choice between the performance and the non-performance of duty. The performance of duty is as obligatory as the unselfishness of motives is imperative. The aspirant's freedom in regard to motive and duty is in fact even more restricted, as we shall see in the course of our work to-day. His duties also he cannot choose in accordance with his own likes and dislikes, as those duties are determined for him, as for others, by the natural relation between the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* and the 'qualities' of work. This fact that they are so determined ought to enable him to see that the work of all embodied beings is really impelled by the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti.* And when he sees this, he can no longer entertain logically any feeling of *ahaṅkāra* or *i-ness* in relation to work and its results. To know the illogicality of the feeling of *i-ness* is not, however, the same thing as to become free from it in practice ; and what is required is a real practical freedom from this intellectually illogical and morally unwholesome feeling of *i-ness.* In some few cases the mere knowledge of the *sāṅkhya* position, that 'qualities' operate in relation to 'qualities', may in itself be an adequate means to subdue the selfish feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* effectively. But in the large majority of instances in human life, this knowledge has to be supported by religious faith and devotion before it can become really efficacious in curing the moral malady of selfishness. That is why Arjuna was advised to

throw upon God the whole burden of agential responsibility in relation to work, on the ground that He is the source of all power and the sustainer of all life in the universe. It may appear from this that faith in God and in His agency in relation to all work is useful only as an accessory aid to philosophical analysis and intellectual conviction, and that the religious reliance of people upon God, as the ultimate agent of everything that is ever done in the universe, has no direct and independent value as a means to destroy their common human tendencies in favour of selfishness. Such is not, however, Śrī-Kṛishṇa's opinion. He obviously held that philosophical analysis and intellectual conviction are rarely, if at all, competent in themselves to kill selfishness, and that they therefore invariably stand in need of religious faith and devotion as aids to enable them to produce the required moral purification and spiritual strength in the aspirant. He was at the same time of opinion that men's religious reliance on God is, even when unassociated with any intellectual conviction derived from philosophical analysis, quite capable of encouraging their purity and moral strength, so as to free them well from all the alluring bonds of selfishness and sensuality. The *ślōka*, with which we begin our work to-day, gives expression to this idea. Both reason and faith are factors in the production of unselfishness in life. Reason alone often fails to produce the required unselfishness, although faith alone does not so often so completely fail. Accordingly Śrī-Kṛishṇa taught as follows:

ये मे मतमिदं नित्यमनुतिष्ठन्ति मानवाः ।
श्रद्धावन्तोऽनसूयन्तो मुच्यन्ते तेऽपि कर्मभिः ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Those men, who, with faith and without envy, adopt this teaching of Mine always, (they) also are freed from (the bondage of) *karma*.

The *mata* or teaching referred to by Śrī-Kṛishṇa as His in this *ślōka* is what has been stated in the immediately preceding *ślōka*. That is why He speaks of it here as *this* teaching of Mine. It therefore refers to the religious reliance upon God as the one and only independent agent of all work that is in any manner done by any

being in the universe, so that people may thereby manage to overcome successfully all their strong internal promptings in favour of bondage-compelling selfishness and sensuality. Please note that, if we do not bear in mind distinctly that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has here spoken of Himself as an incarnation of God, we are certain to miss the point of the teaching. In almost every religion, which has a comparatively high ethical purpose, we may notice that the whole nature of man is conceived to consist of two different aspects, one of which is spoken of as his higher nature while the other is spoken of as his lower nature. The difference between this lower nature and the higher nature of man is brought out in English in an expressive manner by the widely recognised contrast between the flesh and the spirit, the flesh representing the lower and the spirit the higher nature of man. The flesh is typical of the body, and means very much the same thing as the *prakṛiti* of the embodiment. The spirit stands for the *purusha*. Accordingly the lower nature of man is the nature of the flesh, and the higher nature is the nature of the spirit. Because the nature of man is thus compounded of a lower and a higher element, his life also is subject to the mixed influences of the flesh and of the spirit. Generally it is the influence of the flesh that is apt to be stronger in the life of most embodied beings. It is often so strong that it keeps the higher influence of the spirit wholly in the back ground. Where the flesh is allowed free scope to assert itself, there the spirit is forced to retreat behind ; and wherever the spirit is encouraged to assert itself well, there the flesh is rendered weak and powerless for harm. It is this antagonistic relation between the lower and the higher natures of man, that makes the living of the spiritual life very hard, in as much as the life of the flesh is always apt to be aggressively strong in the case of most embodied beings. The central problem of the philosophy of conduct is indeed no other than the problem of how the influence of the spirit may be helped to assert itself effectively as against the influences of the flesh ; in other words, it is the problem of arriving at self-realisation through successful self-conquest. To this end Arjuna was taught that he should get rid of the selfish feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*, and that he should at the same time go on living the life of duty and achievement. It is possible to put this teaching into practice either with the aid of philosophic wisdom or with the aid of religious faith. Although it

has to be granted that right reason generally leads us to the ascertainment of truth, still reason in itself is not always reliable or effective as a help to right conduct, as it is not capable of careful and convenient management in the hands of all. I need not give you any proof to show that, when we place ourselves entirely under the guidance of reason and thus conduct ourselves in accordance with what we hold to be philosophic wisdom, even then we cannot be altogether free from the danger of badly mistaking untruth for truth and appearance for reality. Whatever happens to be our reason appears to us to be right reason, although it may in reality be wrong reason. Moreover, reason as the sole guide of conduct is quite apt to be as often unavailable as it is uncertain. Indeed, reason is too much of an aristocratic guide; it is not at all easy for common men to command it and to propitiate it as required. Only a few born aristocrats of nature succeed well in commanding the guidance of reason and in living the higher life of the spirit under its direction. Nevertheless, none of us can afford to discard the guidance of reason altogether; for, if we did so, we would be simply shunning light and courting darkness. Though the light of reason is too often uncertain and flickering, it still is light; and as such it belongs to the higher spirit-nature of man. To place ourselves voluntarily at the disposal of the darkness of ignorance is therefore to make ourselves ready and willing slaves to the promptings of the flesh and thus miss all the possibilities of our higher nature altogether.

Therefore, the proper course that is left open to us is to live in the light of reason and to seek at the same time the support of something, which, being safer and surer than reason, is capable of correcting its misleading uncertainty and aristocratic unavailability. Śrī-Kṛishṇa taught Arjuna that such a corrective of reason is to be found in faith, in the faith that God is the ultimate agent of every work that is done in the universe, and that He is therefore the true owner of every thing that is produced therein as the result of work. Please do not interpret my remark, that faith of this kind is other than reason, to mean that such faith is either incapable of being supported by reason or that it contradicts reason. I have already drawn your attention to the fact that faith in God, as the ultimate source of all power and life in the universe, rests on the solid rock of truth and is fully capable

of being borne out by enlightened reason and religious experience. Let us note that the field of reason is recognised by all to be confined to the phenomenal world, and that when we try to pass from the phenomenal world to its non-phenomenal foundation and support, we have necessarily to utilise the eye of faith. Hence it is impossible for true reason to contradict true faith. On the other hand, it is the function of true reason to lead to the production of true faith, as it is the function of true faith to make the vision of reason certain, clear and all-comprehensive. This being so, to believe in God, to transfer the agential responsibility of all work to Him, and to regard Him as the real owner of all the things that are produced in the universe as the result of work, cannot but be complementary to the knowledge that, since 'qualities' operate in relation to 'qualities', none of us has any title to be looked upon either as the agent of work or as the owner of the produced results of work. Accordingly, although the *sāṅkhya* position of reason and analysis may alone be capable of giving rise to the requisite non-attachment in some cases, faith in God and reliance upon Him as the source of all power and life are very often required to make the aspirant's life of non-attachment complete and unfailing. From this we have to gather that reason and faith together are more effective in destroying the soul's bondage of *karma* than reason alone can ever be in itself. It is desirable to ascertain here what the efficacy of faith alone is in this respect. To attribute to God, and to none other, all agential responsibility in relation to work, and to acknowledge Him alone to be the owner of all things that may ever be owned as property,—these are the lessons of faith that we are here called upon to practise. Seeing that in the *ślōka*, which we are now studying, Śrī-Kṛishṇa has declared in relation to those persons, who live their lives well with the aid of what I have called religious reliance upon God, that they also are freed from the bondage of *karma*, we are bound to draw the inference that Śrī-Kṛishṇa was clearly of opinion that such religious reliance upon God is in itself capable of adequately encouraging the life of non-attachment, so as to produce thereby the final freedom of the soul. To rely solely upon the power of the head and upon the intellectual analysis and exposition of the great problem of life is not so helpful to the attainment of the salvation of the soul, as to rely upon the power of the heart and upon the love and devotion and sacrifice

which the heart as the feeling organ of religious realisation is notably capable of evoking in almost all worthy persons. Reliance upon the head alone may save the aspirant's soul sometimes. And yet it is good in all cases to rely upon the head and the heart together. Reliance upon the heart alone may further be fully capable of saving the soul very often from sin and from the bondage of *karma*. Thus what we are in effect told here is that religion succeeds where even philosophy may fail. To see that religion does succeed unfailingly in this manner, it is necessary that he who seeks its aid must be possessed of faith and must be free from envy. Hence we are told in this *ślōka*, that the religious life of reliance upon God has to be lived with faith and without envy, if such a life is at all to serve well as a means for the sure attainment of salvation. Let us now try and understand what this means.

Where a man lives the life of reason, there cannot be much room for insincerity there. If logic is insincere, it is thereby doomed to be untrue and unreasonable. It is, however, very different in connection with the religious life. Insincere religion is seen to be quite as possible as insincere logic is impossible. The insincerity, which is noticeable in association with the religious life, is generally of the conscious kind; sometimes it may be of the unconscious kind also. There are always to be found in every society persons, who are not really religious but only pretend to be so with a purpose. The religious life easily lends itself to the practice of such a deception; and there is always more than enough of temptation for men to pretend to be religious when they are not really so. We are all aware how very possible it is for men to observe with scrupulous care all the outer forms of religion, while they discard the spirit of it altogether. If, along with the possibility of this outer pretension, we take into consideration the fact that even the life, which is religious only in appearance, can generally command respect in society, we at once come to know the impulse which prompts religious insincerity. This is what I have spoken of as conscious insincerity. But there are also persons in society, who somehow have come to believe honestly that they are living the religious life, although true faith, which is at the root of all religions, has no place whatever in their hearts. This frame of mind in them is what I have called unconscious insincerity

in religion, although some may see a contradiction in terms in the expression unconscious insincerity; such insincerity may be due to an honest idea that religion is more an affair of form and ceremonial than of faith and devotion. It goes without saying that conscious insincerity in respect of the religious life is highly culpable; and I am sure that you will all agree with me in thinking that Śrī-Kṛishṇa was perfectly right in condemning even unconscious insincerity and faithlessness in relation to the religious life. In fact, according to Him, religion without faith is no religion at all. That is why the possession of faith is strictly enjoined on the aspirant whose aim is to attain salvation through the instrumentality of the religious life. Moreover, faith as the foundation of the religious life is subject to be attacked and undermined in various ways. Although all religions have to be helpful to one another and look upon want of faith and irreligion only as their common enemy, still there is really too much of unfortunate quarrel and contention among religions in the life of the world as we now know it. And history bears out well enough that what is known as *odium theologicum* has been a fairly long-standing feature of human civilisation. Whether true faith in God and in the higher life of the spirit is more undermined by the aggressiveness of irreligion, or by the conflict of religion against religion, is a question which it is not quite easy to answer at once. Nevertheless, I am tempted to believe that, in relation to the higher life that rests on religion, the former of these is not any more harmful than the latter. In any case the position of faith is made risky on account of more than one kind of human imperfection; and the injunction to take care of faith as the essential foundation of the religious life is therefore abundantly needed. The other injunction, which is also impliedly given here in this *ślōka* to the aspirant, who strives to attain the salvation of the soul through living well the religious life, is that he should be free from envy. The Sanskrit word *asuyā* means envy, and is explained as *parōtkarshāsahishṇutva*; that is, as the incapacity to put up with the superiority of another. You all know how the religious life insists on a full and hearty recognition of the unrivalled superiority of God as the Lord of the Universe. There are some persons whose feeling of *ahaṅkāra* or *i-ness* is so great that they cannot bring themselves even to look upon God as the real and ultimate agent of all the

work which they do from time to time with a view to achieve such results as they desire. The intensity of their *ahaṅkāra* contaminates their very blood with envy, so as to make them rebel at heart even against the unquestionable superiority of God. It is evident on the face of it that this kind of envy is inimical to religious faith altogether. I am led to think that this envy of the irreligious person in relation to God is not the only kind of envy that is condemned here. The envy of the followers of one religion as against another religion and its followers is also evidently condemned ; for, this other kind of envy too undermines religious faith quite as effectively as the envy of the irreligious man of pronounced *ahaṅkara* does. The religious life of true reliance upon God is impossible without faith ; and true faith can find no place at all in the heart which is defiled by envy. There is, again, the equally condemnable envy directed against God incarnate as man ; and this also is injurious to faith. The truly religious man, who has to be dominated by faith, should, therefore, be free from all forms of envy.

It may, however, be urged here that intense faith and very strong envy may co-exist in the bosom of a devoutly religious person, when his envy is directed against other religions than his own. In his case it may well be said that the intensity of his envy of other religions is a measure of the intensity of his faith in his own religion. The history of Islam is capable of illustrating the close relation existing between hot iconoclastic zeal and the fury of propagandism. The history of Christianity is also capable of illustrating this relation well enough. Even Buddhism does not seem to have been altogether free from iconoclastic intemperance, although among the propagandistic religions of the world it has shown itself to be the most tolerant and the most markedly sweet and reasonable in all its relations with other religions. The self-assertion of the propagandist is undeniably based on a kind of faith ; but that is not the faith which Śrī-Kṛishṇa has enjoined upon all those who wish to attain salvation through the life of religious reliance upon God. The faith of the propagandist, who aggressively asserts that his religion is the only true religion and that all other religions are false, makes him intemperate as well as intolerant, and encourages in him the vicious feeling of *ahaṅkāra*. You have been already told that

he doctrine of the harmony of religions is an essential part of the teachings of Śrī-Kṛishṇa as given in the *Bhagavadgītā*. The comparative study of religions conducted in the impartial spirit of scientific enquiry in these modern days is more and more tending to establish unequivocally the full truthfulness of this doctrine of the harmony of religions. Although it is not unknown that blind bigotry tries to use even the science of religion to serve its own unwholesome purpose, there can be no doubt that truly liberal and impartial modern culture sees more truth and more good in the tolerant teaching of Śrī-Kṛishṇa than in the narrow and contentious blindness of the bigot. The pious and pure-hearted Mussulaman worshipping his Allah is quite as capable of high religious realisation as the pious and pure-hearted Christian worshipping his Christ, or the pious and pure-hearted Hindu worshipping his Śiva or Vishṇu. When judged by their best fruits, all the advanced religions known to history appear to be equally potent in encouraging the holy life of unselfishness and spiritual enlightenment. Therefore the comprehensive practice of religious toleration is not merely a virtue which rests on charity and liberal culture ; it is a duty which is demanded of us by truth and hence by God Himself. That the witnesses of God in one age or in one country ought not to think or speak lightly of the witnesses of God in another age or another country is a natural and necessary result of the faith in the oneness of God and in His supreme sovereignty and universal love. The Allah of the Mussulman is not and cannot be different from the Jehova of the Jew or the Father in Heaven of the Christian or the Brahman or Śiva or Vishṇu of the Hindu. Even an endless variety of names cannot make Him essentially more than one ; and He would be pleased as well and would smile as sweetly when addressed by any one among these many names as when addressed by any other. If the *ahaṅkāra* of the irreligious man leads him to be envious even of the supremacy of God, and thus induces him to discard religious faith altogether, the *ahaṅkāra* of the zealous bigot, who is himself religious, is apt to make him envious of the good name and worthiness of other religions than his own. In the former case envy undermines faith ; and in the latter case narrow and wrongly directed faith gives rise to envy and uncharity and intolerance. Both these results are injurious to the healthy developement of the spiritual life. Accordingly, it is our

duty to see firstly that our own faith in our God is quite firm and sincere, and secondly that this faith of ours is not antagonistically disposed towards the faith which others have as the basis of their religious life. To help and not to hate should always be the motto of the truly religious man; and his work has ever to be conciliatory and constructive, but never to be offensively censorious and destructive. We have thus seen why it is that the wisely directed and earnestly sincere religious life has to be based on faith and has to be free from envy: otherwise, even the religious life may fail to destroy the bondage of *karma* and to bestow the blessing of salvation upon the soul of the struggling aspirant. The non-religious philosopher, who has succeeded in overcoming, through the power of his luminous wisdom, the demon of selfishness and sensuality, may have the way to the attainment of salvation open enough before him. But the position of those, who are polluted either by the *ahaṅkāra* of irreligion or by the *ahaṅkāra* of bigotry and intolerance, is, indeed, very different. It is of them that the next *ślōka* speaks:

ये त्वेतदभ्यसूयन्तो नानुतिष्ठन्ति मे मतम् ।
सर्वज्ञानविमूढांस्तान् विद्धि नष्टानचेतसः ॥ ३२ ॥

32. But those, who, being envious, do not adopt this teaching of Mine,—understand (them) to be mistaken in relation to all knowledge, to be senseless and lost.

We have already seen how the guidance of life with the aid of religion is possible only to those, who are possessed of wise faith and are free from envy and the consequent irreverence and intolerance. In this *ślōka* we are told what becomes of those, who are, nevertheless, characterised by envy. The attitude of the non-religious philosopher towards religion is generally one of agnostic indifference. The very cautious wariness of his philosophic wisdom enables him to see at once that, in so far as the question of religion is concerned, the danger of over-negation is not less possible to arise than the danger of over-assertion. To postulate readily what cannot, from the stand-point of clear reason, be proved to exist is not more illogical than to negate what cannot be conclusively proved to be untrue or non-existent. Therefore his attitude towards faith cannot be one of envy. The egotistic and irreligious atheist is, however of

a different temper. To him all religion is an anathema; and, in declining to subscribe to what he considers to be the unproved positive, he betrays a leaning to accept the unproved negative. We may thus see that his mind cannot be free from that distortion of bias, which makes him prone to be envious of all religion. Unlike this person, the egotistic bigot is not faithless or irreligious. Nevertheless, his very bigotry makes his mind become subject to the distortion of bias, so that he is led thereby to see good where impartial persons see harm, and to see harm where they see good. The atheist's intolerance of all religions is quite as productive of mental bias as the bigot's intolerance of other religions than his own. Neither the atheist nor the bigot can therefore judge aright. Accordingly the idea contained in this *ślōka* seems to be that those, who are envious either as atheists or as bigots, are sure to be really lost in the end. However, this ruin comes upon them only step by step. The first step in the process is that they quite unconsciously come to be characterised by a mistaken attitude in relation to all knowledge. I am sure you know very well that the problem of faith and religion is the crowning problem of all philosophy. Any kind of mental twist in us, which affects this crowning culmination of philosophic thought, is certain to cause a distortion of view on all occasions when our mind attempts to comprehend the relations existing among the various things that make up the contents of our knowledge and consciousness. There can therefore be no doubt that the religious prejudice is one of the most pervasive of all human prejudices. It gives rise to a tendency to indulge excessively in the light and inconsiderately pleasant pastime of depreciating the opinions and convictions and intellectual achievements of all those, who, in our eyes, are not as we are; and at the same time it makes excessive self-appreciation the very breath of our life. Modern European criticism of ancient Indian thought and learning gives evidence enough to show how the religious twist in particular can completely upset the balance of even very highly cultured judgments, which are deliberately based on strictly scientific principles. Envy and intolerance thus cause the mind to become permeated with partiality, so as to make it impossible for it to be fair and just in all its judgments. It must therefore be clear to us that all things everywhere appear to the envious and intolerant person as other than what they really are. To lose the power of fair

and just judgment is to make the mind itself quite useless as an instrument of true knowledge; and there can surely be nothing improper in saying that the man whose mind has been made imbecile thus has in fact become senseless. In other words, he has become equal to a man who has lost his wisdom altogether, and in whose case his very mind has ceased to be a trustworthy guide in the matter of distinguishing between true and false, between right and wrong, or between good and bad. And, when in this manner he loses the guidance of his reason so as to be incapable of knowing the truth and doing the right, he surely becomes lost, as there is no possibility of his seeking well and obtaining assuredly that salvation, the attainment of which alone constitutes the true purpose of life. There can indeed be no greater loss than the loss of the soul.

Such seems to be the reasoning involved in the import of this *ślōka*; and yet it has been misunderstood by certain unfair critics of the *Gītā*. They lay a special emphasis on the word मे, meaning 'my', which occurs in this and the preceding *ślōkas*; and thereby they draw the inference that the faith and the envy, which are mentioned in them, are faith and envy in relation to Śrī-Kṛishṇa personally,—faith in Him as an incarnation of God and envy of Him as a great religious teacher. It seems to me that it could never have been the intention of Śrī-Kṛishṇa to declare that all those would finally come to ruin who did not believe in Him personally as an incarnation of God. My reason for thinking so is not that, in the annals of history, religious and philosophical teachers have not frequently attached special importance to their person and to their teachings. As a matter of fact the general rule with them has been to do so in a marked manner. But the *Gītā* presents Śrī-Kṛishṇa to us as a notable exception to this general rule. To maintain that in the scheme of salvation, which He explained to Arjuna, He attached any exclusive importance to faith in Himself as an incarnation of God, is against the tolerant spirit of the *Gītā*, and is quite inconsistent with the course of development which Hinduism has passed through in this country mostly under the guiding influence of the *Gītā*. Moreover the meaning, which is dependent upon a verbal emphasis so largely as it is in this case, cannot well be taken to be sufficiently certain and authoritative. Although the idea that Śrī-Kṛishṇa attached

some special importance to faith in Himself and in His teachings is in itself unobjectionable, as it simply makes Him similar in that respect to more than one religious teacher known to history, still it cannot at all be accepted by us for the sole and yet sufficient reason that it is not true. It is not that Śrī-Kṛishṇa lays no special claim at all to recognition as an incarnation of God. On the other hand He appears to have insisted that Arjuna should recognise Him as such, and is also known to have made it impossible for Arjuna to think of Him as other than divine. Still, what is pointed out in this and the preceding *ślōkas* is nothing more than the general usefulness of religious faith as a means for the attainment of salvation. The way, in which man's religious reliance upon God is calculated to help him in commanding the power to live the life of purity and active unselfishness, is different from the way in which philosophic reasoning and conviction may be expected to help him. Since the flesh is strong and the spirit is weak, so many of us so often know the better and do the worse. It is not that, whenever we do wrong, we do so, because we do not know that wrong is wrong. Philosophic reasoning may tell us which course of conduct is really the proper one for us to follow; it may tell us that to be unattached to the fruits of work, at the same time that we are ardently engaged in the performance of work, is the best and the surest way to attain salvation. But can it make us do the right in the same way in which it enables us to know the right? Philosophic reasoning gives all its teachings from a high and detached platform; it does not hold us by the hand and gently lead us along the path by which we have to walk. Like a sign-post it simply tells us which way leads whither. Merely to know this is not enough for our guidance, so long as the promptings of interest continue to disagree with the teachings of reason. It is mainly the forces of our lower nature that impel our action; they mostly work out our lives. Reason, however, can rarely prevent this of itself; it is too weak as a source or stopper of action. It illumines thought much more than it impels or opposes action. Therefore reason alone cannot effectively counteract the promptings of our *prakṛiti*. Moreover, the endeavour to check the free play of nature by mere force is ever doomed to end in failure. The next two *ślōkas* point out this fact; and in so doing they direct our attention to the greater educative value of mental co-ordination than of coercion.

सदृशं चेष्टते स्वस्याः प्रकृतेर्ज्ञानवानपि ।
प्रकृतिं यान्ति भूतानि निग्रहः किं करिष्यति ॥ ३३ ॥

इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थे रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ ह्यस्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ ३४ ॥

33. Even he, who is possessed of wisdom, acts in accordance with his own nature. (All) beings tend to (their own) nature. What will coercion do?

34. Likes and dislikes are invariably established in relation to the objects of every one of the senses. One should not come under the power of these (likes and dislikes); for, they are one's enemies.

We have now learnt that man is made up of both *prakṛiti* and *purusha.* He has his body and his soul, and is in consequence a composite being made up of the flesh and the spirit. His soul is, as it were, kept in confinement in a prison-house, which is made up of *prakṛiti* and is guarded over by *prakṛiti.* Under such circumstances the chief purpose of his life very naturally happens to be the liberation of the soul from this prison-house of *prakṛiti.* Hence the main problem in relation to the soul is to make out how it may be enabled to obtain fully the freedom which belongs to it by its own inherent right. By coercing the authorities of the prison and disobeying the rules of discipline enforced therein, a prisoner can rarely hope to win back permanently his lost freedom. Even when disobedience and rebellion may for a time enable a prisoner to get out of the prison, he is apt to be very soon forced to find his way again into that same or into another prison, there to live under greater restraint than before and with the chances of release put off to a much later date. But the prisoner, who obeys heartily all the rules of discipline that are current in the prison and does nothing in the way of forcing the hands of the authorities, is in a very different situation. His very obedience tends to mollify the rigour of the restraint to which he is subjected; and he may thereby be even enabled to get out of the prison soon. Moreover, this same obedience of his cannot

fail to exercise a reforming influence on his character, so as to make it more and more impossible for him to become confined in a prison again. This analogy of the prisoner in the gaol holds true in relation to all souls which are imprisoned in material embodiments ; and let us apply the analogy to Arjuna himself. The fear of sin and of the bondage of *karma*, which he then so distinctly exhibited, is enough to show to us that he sincerely believed the salvation of the soul to be the supreme purpose for which life had to be lived. That is, he looked upon *mōksha* as the *parama-purushārtha.* Nevertheless, he did not know well how he was to live his life in order that he might unfailingly achieve that supreme purpose. He endeavoured to ignore altogether the limitation which the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* impose upon an embodied being in respect of the achievement of the final freedom of *mōksha.* He seems to have felt that the shortest way to get out of the power of *prakṛiti* was directly to disobey that power by force, and that this shortest way was of course the best way also. Born as a Kshattriya and possessing in a marked degree the soldierly qualities of a courageous and heroic warrior, he must have had a *prakṛiti* in which the *rajō-guṇa* was characteristically dominant. Although he was thus born to be a soldier, he still wished vainly to turn his back upon the battle-field and all its glorious opportunities, believing that the life of mere inaction and non-achievement was the same as the life of pure non-attachment leading to the final liberation of the soul from the bondage of matter. In other words, he wanted to overcome the dominant tendencies of his nature, not by discreet obedience and cautious self-guidance, but by careless disregard and defiant disobedience. Supposing that Arjuna had been allowed to give up the life of the chivalrous hero and warrior, and had been at the same time permitted to adopt, as he desired, the life of the mendicant beggar and the inactive *sannyāsin*, we have to see how far he would have succeeded in living well this latter life of his own free choice. All beings tend to nature ; and what will coercion do? You may remember how we have been already told that merely to starve the flesh by force is not competent to kill the inner relish for the things of the flesh. Even those, who are engaged in taming an unruly horse, for instance, know that the best way of bringing the animal under control is not by trying to hold it in forced check from the beginning, but by securely

giving it scope enough to exhaust itself, so that its power to oppose rational guidance may thereby be markedly weakened. What we all have to do with ourselves in the matter of controlling our own conduct is very similar to the work of the horse-tamer. We have securely to give scope enough to the operation of the forces of our *prakṛiti*, and make them at the same time by cautious control more and more amenable to such rational guidance as is calculated to ensure for us the attainment of the full freedom of the soul. It is a well known fact in every department of human experience that to cross the path of nature is to court ruin, and that intelligent obedience to her laws is ever the best means of so controlling her as to make her unfailingly helpful to human progress. And when obedience and agreeable conduct on our part induce nature to be helpful to our progress, her kindness and bounty are known to be almost always immeasurable.

What is it then that the aspirant after moral progress and spiritual emancipation is expected to do, in order that he may successfully enlist the kindly helpfulness of nature on his side? He has been distinctly warned against the endeavour to suppress the normal processes of nature by sheer force, and has been told that he should not readily place himself under the power of those likes and dislikes, which are invariably associated with the objects of every one of the senses. Let us now try to understand well the meaning of the injunction that he should not place himself under the power of those likes and dislikes. It has already been pointed out to you very clearly that all our acts of sense-perception are associated with the feelings of pleasure and pain, so that some sensations are pleasurable while others are painful; and it seems to have been Śrī-Kṛishṇa's view that there can really be no sensation which is neither pleasurable nor painful. It has therefore to be understood that, in the very act of perceiving their objects, the senses invariably produce the feeling of pleasure or pain as the case may be. It is possible to separate in thought the process of sense-perception from the associated sensation of pleasure or pain. Nevertheless, the perception and the sensation are produced together; and hence as incidents of human experience they are inseparable. The sensations of pleasure and pain determine in their turn our likes and dislikes, the general

rule being that people like what is pleasurable and dislike what is painful. This association of likes and dislikes with the sensations of pleasure and pain is as invariable and widely prevalent as the association of the sensations of pleasure and pain is with the process of sense-perception. And the result of this is that our love of pleasure and hatred of pain are quite easily and almost imperceptibly transformed into the love of such things as give rise to pleasure and the hatred of such things as give rise to pain in the course of their natural and normal perception. It is in this manner that our likes and dislikes happen to be invariably established in relation to the objects of every one of our senses. So far, every thing may be seen to be perfectly natural. It is natural for the senses to perceive their objects, as it is natural for the sense-perceptions so arising to give rise to the sensations of pleasure and pain. Similarly it is quite natural to love pleasure and to hate pain; and there is surely nothing unreasonable or unnatural in men's love of pleasure producing the love of pleasure-giving objects, or in their hatred of pain producing the hatred of pain-giving objects. Accordingly we have to see that the wise aspirant after the salvation of the soul is not called upon to deaden his senses or to keep them shut by force, as both these processes are really unnatural and ineffective. Nor is he, for the same reason, called upon to so modify his mental constitution as to make it naturally possible for him to love pain and pain-giving objects. But what he is actually called upon to do is to see that he does not make himself into a slave of likes and dislikes, that is, into a slave of pleasure and pain, but that he manages to maintain the mastery of his will over them. The psychology, which accounts for the origin of the will through these very likes and dislikes, which are dependent upon pleasure and pain, may not appreciate the rationality and naturalness of this injunction quite willingly. But there is also another view in psychology, according to which the will is the inborn organ of power appertaining to the soul, and thus happens to be the only means by which the spirit may assert itself against the tendencies of the flesh. Anyhow, it is one thing to keep the senses open to perceive their objects and to produce their sensations of pain and pleasure, but quite another thing to make pleasure and pain hold such sway over us as is apt to place us wholly at their disposal. You are aware that the longing in the heart

for pleasure is not killed by forcibly shutting off the objects of pleasure from the sphere of normal and natural experience. Nor is the dread of pain capable of being removed from within us in that manner. On the other hand, such a process of enforced sense-starvation is very well calculated to intensify the longing for pleasure as well as the aversion to pain. The best way, in which the love of pleasure and the hatred of pain may be kept under control, so as not to allow them to weaken or to overpower the will, is to allow full scope to the normal course of natural experience in respect of the sensations of pleasure and pain, and to see at the same time that they do not produce such dominant likes and dislikes in us as are too powerful to be easily directed or controlled. It is neither the experience of pleasure nor the experience of pain that creates *karma* to keep the soul in bondage. What really creates it is the selfish attachment to pleasing enjoyment and the objects of such enjoyment; and that sort of attachment is undeniably the result of strong likes and dislikes in relation to pleasure and pain. Therefore it is these likes and dislikes that are in truth inimical to the spiritual progress of the aspirant. To keep guard over them and to hold them under control, while living the natural life of normal experience and energetic action and achievement, is the only way to foil this foe of man's moral and religious progress effectively so as to enable him to win thereafter the valued reward of spiritual enlightenment and emancipation.

It is probably meant to be conveyed here that the power of philosophy to bestow the discipline required for living this kind of life well is considerably weaker than the power of religion. With the sole aid of philosophic enlightenment and intellectual realisation it is not easy to take care of the strength of the will and to direct it effectively against the temptations of pleasure and pain. True philosophy ought certainly to enable the philosopher to live the pure and perfect life. But all philosophy is not true enough for such a purpose; and, even where it is not really wanting in truthfulness, it is otherwise possible for philosophy to fail as a practical guide of life. Similarly religion also may prove to be defective and inadequate as a help to enable weak men and women to live the pure and perfect life. Nevertheless, we may make out how, when the intellect alone is utilised as the guide of life, it is apt to prove impatient so as to

endeavour to adopt coercion as the best means for the attainment of the end in view. The discipline of religion, however, covers the whole nature of man, and uses the slow and steady processes of mental as well as moral co-ordination and helpful emotional invigoration for the gradual perfection of the conduct of human life. Whether this distinction between philosophy and religion as guides of conduct is implied in this context or not, there can be no doubt that the spiritually perfect life is here conceived to be a normally full life, wherein the whole nature of man is trained in its completeness to fulfil the supreme purpose of the emancipation of the soul from the bondage of *karma* so as to release it from all the limitations which are due to that bondage. No life of any person can anywhere be either normal or full, as long as it is not planned and guided so as to be in full harmony with the inner endowment as well as the outer environment of that same person. The life that is worked out through coercion loses all its spontaneity; and with that loss it ceases to be normal and fails to be full. To cramp life in any manner is to make it lop-sided; and the life that is cramped and lop-sided is indeed the least fit to be perfected. This of course ought not be interpreted to mean that perfection consists in the rank exuberance of wild nature. We can never commit this mistake and misunderstand thus the meaning of a perfect life, if we bear in mind how very different in fact coercion is from control. We coerce nature, when we endeavour to force her operations against her own tendencies; and we control nature, when we carefully study those very tendencies and utilise them intelligently so as to make them subserve well the ends of true progress. Hence coercion is as harmful as guidance and control are beneficial in the moral as well as the material life of individuals and communities; and life in society can never be held to be perfectly well guided or controlled so long as there is even the smallest antagonism between the good of the individual and the good of the community. I have heard it said that that society is ideally perfectly organised wherein each is seen to live for all and all are seen to live for each. No society has as yet been able to show itself in history as possessing unmistakably all the needed characteristics of such an ideally perfect organisation. There have been and are societies in which the individual is more or less sacrificed for the upkeep of the corporate life of the community. Similarly there

have been and are societies which are open to be criticised as being too individualistic in their organisation. It is always hard to draw accurately the line of demarcation between due individual liberty and due social authority; and yet it is through the regulation of the duty of individuals that their good as well as the good of the community is capable of being encouraged and safe-guarded. And the way in which our duties are to be regulated for such a purpose is pointed out in the next *ślōka*;

श्रेयान् स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात् स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ ३५ ॥

35. One's own duty, not well performed, is better (for one) than another's duty, well performed. To be discomfited in respect of one's own duty is preferable; another's duty is fraught with fear.

Before endeavouring to understand fully the meaning of this really important *ślōka*, we have to make out clearly how the distinction between one's own duty and another's duty has been already shown to arise. Let us remember that we have been distinctly told that, since the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* operate so as to determine the 'qualities' of their correlated work, coercion can do nothing at all to change them. We have tried to see how true this is; and in it we have the basis of the distinction between one's own duty and another's duty. It has come out, from all that we have learnt so far regarding the question of the choice of duty, that whatever work a man is fitted for by nature, that he ought to do as his duty. It is a well known fact of common observation that all persons are not born with the same endowments or inherited capacities. Recent scientific enquiry and research have also shown, as we have seen, that even the moral character of the lives of people is determined by the endowments with which they are born, and that saintliness runs in the blood as much as criminality does. The Sanskritic statement, that the *guṇas* of the *prakṛiti* constituting a man's embodiment determine the *guṇas* of the work that he does in life, means nothing other than that the character of a man's life is determined by the natural endowment with which he is born.

Therefore life simply offers opportunities for the inborn potentialities of men and women to become actualised in the visible form of work and all its varied results; and education can hence mean no more than merely leading out the power, which is within, to assert itself well without. No such thing as the putting in of power is considered to be at all possible. The idea, that men's duties are determined for them by their natural fitness to live particular kinds of life, is also given expression to in the next chapter of the *Gītā*, in the context wherein it is said, as you will see, that the division of society into the four *varṇas* has been arranged by God in accordance with the 'qualities' of the *prakṛiti* belonging to the various persons therein, and in accordance also with the various kinds of work which are naturally correlated to those 'qualities'. But the most distinct expression of the idea is to be found in the very last chapter of the *Gītā*, wherein all the important lessons taught in the work as a whole are recapitulated in relation to their practical application. In this last chapter, it is clearly declared that the man, who is devoted to the performance of his own duties, attains easily the *summum bonum* of life, that one's own duty, even if ill-performed, is better for one than another's duty well-performed, and that no man can ever come to harm by doing the work which is determined for him by his own nature. Thus it may be more than amply demonstrated that it is throughout maintained in the *Gītā*, that men's duties are determined for them by the potentialities of their own nature. Accordingly, it is the duty of the man, in whose *prakṛiti* the *sattva-guṇa* prevails, to live the *sāttvika* form of life, as it is the duty of the man, in whose *prakṛiti* the *rajō-guṇa* or the *tamō-guṇa* prevails, to live the *rājasa* or the *tāmasa* form of life as the case may be. It is, however, the larger outline of life with its basic principles and main purpose that is determined in this manner. Within the limitation so imposed by nature, there is of course room enough for choice and for gradation. But this choice is naturally not of the qualitative kind. According to what is stated in the last chapter of the *Gītā*, all such duties, as require for their performance tranquillity, self-control, self-restaint patience, straightforwardness, knowledge, wisdom and faith in God are Brahminical in nature. That is, those who are born with the fitness to develop and to manifiest these characteristics in a marked way are all entitled to live the Brahminical life. Similarly heroism

valour, courage, cleverness, firmness in battle and masterfulness are declared to be the natural qualifications which fit one for living the life of the Kshattriya. Agriculture, cattle-breeding and commerce constitute the life-work of Vaisyas by nature, and physical labour and personal service form the function in life of all those who are by nature fitted to be Śūdras. The philosopher, the soldier, the wealth-producer and the servant-labourer are thus considered to be the typical representatives of the different kinds of functions which have to be performed for maintaining the welfare of society; and it is evident that the qualifications required for the proper discharge of these various kinds of functions are so related to the functions themselves, that each out of the four sets of typical qualifications, as classified by implication or open statement in the *Gītā*, can enable its owner to live only a particular kind of life well. The philosopher's natural qualifications are for the living of the philosophic life, while the soldier's natural qualifications are for the living of the soldierly life. In the case of the wealth-producer and the servant-labourer also there is a similar correspondence between a set of personal qualifications on the one hand and the kind of life that is to be lived on the other. Therefore that duty, which is determined for one by one's own nature thus, is one's own duty; while every other duty, which is determined for another by his different nature, is another's duty.

After having so ascertained the difference between one's duty and another's duty, we have to understand the reason why one is called upon to stick to one's own duty under all circumstances. It may strike you at once that the chief reason is because it is harmful to coerce nature in any manner whatsoever. As in the case of the hot-house cultivation of plants, it may be possible to coerce nature so as to make her yield sometimes such results as she ordinarily does not. It is, however, a well known fact that the plant, which is subjected to hot-house cultivation, yields generally poor produce, and that the process of coercing nature adopted in relation to that plant tends to make its very constitution abnormal and therefore really unhealthy. This same thing holds true in connection with what may be conceived as the cultivation of man for the purpose of gathering in the fruit-harvest of character. By using the process of

coercing nature, a man may manage to succeed fairly well sometimes in adopting a form of life for which he is not fitted by nature. His success here is of course bound to be inferior to that of the man who is fitted by nature for the living of such a life; and even this inferior success, that he may achieve, is apt to injure the vitality of his nature and weaken the very potentialities of his moral and spiritual development. It is a well acknowledged fact of human experience in every department of human life that, when people undertake to do even such things as they have a natural fitness for doing, their effort is not at once crowned with complete success. On the other hand they have to progress slowly by means of continued practice from less complete to more complete success, or, as it often enough happens, even from failure to success. In the process of working in accordance with natural endowment and fitness, it has to be noted that every failure is conducive to ultimate success; and the greater the number of failures or incomplete successes in connection with a person's endeavour to accomplish an achievement, the greater will be the excellence of that accomplishment in the end. Hence, when nature is not opposed and antagonised but is befriended thus, every failure tends to improve the power of the worker to achieve the desired results, and is thus calculated to make him grow gradually into a full man. It is therefore doubly unwise to coerce unsuited nature to produce abnormal results; and yet it is this kind of coercion of nature that Arjuna proposed to practise in his own case. A Kshattriya, born of Kshattriya parents and inheriting the Kshattriya blood of many generations, is, as you know, expected to be possessed of a *prakṛiti*, wherein the *rajō-guṇa* is preponderant; and accordingly Arjuna's *prakṛiti* must have been characterised by the preponderance of the *rajō-guṇa*. In a moment of weakness and under the unconscious influence of an ignorant and selfish pessimism, he felt an impulse in favour of renouncing his own natural life of the chivalrous warrior and of adopting at the same time the unsuited life of mendicancy and ascetic non-achievement. Such moments of weakness occur in the life of most persons; and even the stoutest of hearts is apt to quake when subjected to the highly trying struggle of a severe conflict of duties. The life of philosophic calm and absolute resignation is ever incompatible with the preponderance of the *rajō-guṇa*

in one's *prakṛiti ;* such a life becomes natural and appropriate only when it is the *sattva-guṇa* that is preponderant. Therefore Arjuna's proposal to adopt the life of mendicant asceticism was incompatible with his own nature ; it amounted to an endeavour to prevent the predominant *rajō-guṇa* of his *prakṛiti* from effectively operating and to make it produce such results as the predominance of the *sattva-guṇa* alone can do. He thus wanted to coerce nature, and was rightly enough told that it would be better for him even to fail in the performance of such duties as he was naturally fitted for, than to succeed in the performance of the duties for which he had no natural fitness. This is why we are taught here that it is safe for us even to meet with discomfiture in doing the duties for which we possess the required kind of natural qualification, and that it is highly dangerous to endeavour to perform the duties, for the doing of which we do not possess the needed natural qualification. In such an unnatural endeavour we may be earnest, honest and thoroughly sincere ; still it is harmful to ourselves and harmful to society. But our failure to do well the duties, for which we are naturally qualified, is neither so harmful to ourselves nor so dangerous to society, provided that, even when we fail, we make sure that we have earnestness, honesty and sincerity fully to our credit.

The life that is unnaturally planned injures, as we have tried to see, the very growth of good character in the person who has to live that life, whether the outcome of such a life, measured by means of its achievements, happens to be success or failure. In following perforce an unsuited course of life we seriously disturb in relation to our own progress what may be called its dynamic equilibrium. In other words, we force our nature to become unbalanced, and thus lose all our constitutional advantages in favour of progress. It may easily be seen that the society which allows its members freely to perform the duties, for which they are not fitted by nature, thereby invites calamity to invade its home. The obvious want of economy in the utilization of the available social power is of course one of the evils to which such a society at once exposes itself. But this evil in itself is not half so harmful as the shock which the unregulated freedom of its members gives to social order itself. What a man is fit for by nature, happens to be invariably so to one

particular kind of life; and what he is not so fit for, consists of every other kind of life than the one for which he is fit. When it is authoritatively ruled that the members of a society should adopt such life as they are respectively fitted for by nature, their career in the corporate life of the community becomes fairly fixed and adequately regulated. But if it be ruled that they may adopt courses of life, for which they have no natural qualification, this very permission might give rise to disorder in society, owing to the multiplicity of the unnatural and unsuitable courses of life, which would thus become freely open to them. The maintenance of order in society would become almost impossible, if it ever turned out to be a part of the recognized function of whosoever is responsible for the safe-guarding of that order to allow and encourage every person to do what he is not naturally qualified to do. The adoption of 'another's duty' is thus injurious to him who adopts it, and also to the society which owns him as one of its members. Here it may well be asked what means there are for us to diagnose accurately the kind of natural qualifications that we possess, so that we may truly ascertain and follow that life, for which we are really fit, and cease to strive after the adoption of any life for which we are not duly qualified. Nature herself seems to have provided well for this diagnosis. The influence of heredity is one among the means by which the qualifications of persons for the performance of various kinds of duties in society may approximately be ascertained. The genuine taste and the sustained love of individuals in relation to particular kinds of duty and work are also capable of pointing out the naturalness or otherwise of the association between a duty and its doer. Like false hunger, however, there is also a false taste, which is quite apt to deceive us. Of this we ought to beware, although it is true that soon enough false taste also gives rise to nausea and disgust even as false hunger does. Through action and re-action nature almost always succeeds in making societies and their members find their due level at last. Indeed there is nothing that human history proves more emphatically than this. Nevertheless, it may appear that it is not quite equitable to leave the destiny of individuals so largely at the disposal of nature, which is seen to bestow its favours on them so very unequally. Let us note here that the power of nature over the destiny of persons is in no way amenable to our ideas of propriety regarding it. Moreover,

from the stand-point of the theory of *karma*, we are ourselves responsible for the unequal manner in which nature bestows its favours on us. Therefore, the seemingly just objection against the teaching that our duty in life is determined for us by our own endowment of natural qualifications—the objection that such a regulation of life is positively certain to chill individual ambition unduly and to prevent persons from rising to a higher status than the one to which they are born—loses much of its force and practical usefulness. In accordance with the ethical philosophy expounded in the *Gītā*, there can be no distinction of higher and lower in relation to duties in life; nor can there be any such distinction in relation to the doers of duties. All true duties are required by nature, and therefore all of them are necessarily to be performed; and when the fit person performs the fit duty, each such person is as good as any other. All duties, when they are adopted according to natural fitness and are carried out well with motives of absolute unselfishness, are further shown to be capable of enabling their doers to obtain the salvation of the soul as their highest good. After all, it has to be borne in mind that those who manage to rise from a lower to a higher status in life, as society understands it, do so through obeying nature and through doing well the so-called lower duties before they are at all permitted to perform freely what are commonly held to be higher duties. Under these circumstances there can be nothing strange or unreasonable in the teaching that even discomfiture in the performance of one's own duties is preferable to success in the doing of another's duties, as indeed another's duty is always fraught with fear and gives rise to moral weakness and spiritual breakdown by interfering with the naturally wholesome growth of character in him who wrongly adopts that duty as his own.

The question at the commencement of the chapter having now been fully answered in this manner, Arjuna came to feel a new difficulty in regard to how it is that men commit sin at all, when it so happens that nature prompts them to do all that they do in life, and that what they are prompted to do by nature turns out to be the very duty which they have to do in life. So he put this further question to Śrī-Kṛishṇa :—

अर्जुन उवाच—

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।

अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥ ३६ ॥

ARJUNA SAID:—

36. O Kṛishṇa, prompted by what, then, does this (embodied) person, even when unwilling, commit sin, as if compelled by force?

Please observe how this new question of Arjuna arises from Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teaching that all beings follow their nature, and that the coercion of nature can do no good to any one. We have already seen how the nature of embodied beings is made up of a lower and a higher aspect, and how man's moral and spiritual progress consists in encouraging the higher aspect of his nature to assert itself more and more against its lower aspect. Seeing that the flesh is as much a part of man's nature as the spirit is, it may well be asked what—in the light of this teaching of Śrī-Kṛishṇa that all our duties are determined for us by our nature—may be the justification for maintaining that the influence of the flesh should be subdued by the influence of the spirit. I have already drawn your attention to the fact that most men know the better and do the worse; and as it is pointed out in this *ślōka*, it often happens that, when men sin, they not only know the better but are also mostly unwilling to do the worse. Under such circumstances they are surely apt to feel that they are driven to sin by some uncontrollable force from within. How can it then be said that the life of sin is not impelled by nature? If it be granted that the life of sin is also impelled by nature, how may we blame the sinner for sinning? Thus the great problem of the moral responsibility of man is, as you may see, involved in this question of Arjuna. If we make man into a mere automaton, whose activities are all stimulated and controlled by nature, he cannot help losing at once all cognisance of the obligatoriness of righteousness and losing also all his sense of moral responsibility for the life he lives. A little calm thought is, however, sure to enable us to see how these objections against the teaching of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, regarding the manner in which men's duties are determined for them, cannot stand anything like a searching examination. Even their seeming plausibility

is evidently due to the non-recognition of the exact meaning of the word *nigraha*, which we have translated as 'coercion' here in this context. The *nigraha* of *prakṛiti* really means, as we have seen, the forcing of *prakṛiti* so as to make its predominant *guṇa* either inoperative or operative in producing such results as are not naturally correlated to that *guṇa*. In the endeavour of a *rājasa* man like Arjuna to live the *sāttvika* life of peace, renunciation and non-achievement, there is to be found such a *nigraha* of *prakṛiti*. But there can surely be no such *nigraha* of *prakṛiti*, when a *rājasa* hero and warrior subjects his natural life of action and achievement to the guidance and control of reason and religion. The fact that the selfish and sensual tendencies, which are associated with the life-activities of most persons, are separable at all from those activities, goes to show that those tendencies are not natural in the same sense in which those activities are natural. There are, as I believe you know, ethical philosophers who deny this very separability of these tendencies from the life-activities with which they are associated. According to them no disinterested action is naturally possible. But we have had ample evidence to show that Śrī-Krishṇa's opinion on this point is very different. He distinctly believed in the possibility as well as the naturalness of disinterested action, and the history of humanity can afford abundant proof to show that such a belief does not contradict the truth of nature. If the common human tendencies in favour of selfishness and sensuality are thus made out to be only accidentally associated with the life-activites of men and women, the endeavour to repress these tendencies can never be conceived to be the same thing as the coercion of nature. The Brahmin, the Kshattriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdra, considered as types of the naturally qualified representative workers in society, can all live the morally pure life of sinlessness. Virtue, purity and sinlessness have never been and can never be held as a monopoly by particular classes or by particular professions or by particular individuals. The philosopher, the soldier, the wealth-producer and the servant-labourer may all be pure and sinless or impure and sinful; and as a matter of fact history can as easily point out examples of sinful as well as of sinless lives among philosophers as among soldiers or wealth-producers or servant-labourers. Therefore it is wrong to conclude, from the teaching of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, bearing on the determination of the duties of individuals,

that *prakṛiti* impels them to sin even as she impels them to live a life of action. If people sin, when indeed no irrepressible impulse of nature drives them to do so, how at all can they hope to be free from the responsibility for their sins? Here again Arjuna's doubt is due to his misunderstanding the true meaning of the teacher's teaching; and the remaining *ślōkas* in this chapter are intended to clear away that doubt. The very next *ślōka* answers directly the question regarding why it is that men often sin as if in spite of themselves.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥ ३७ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID :—

37. This is the wishful will, this is the anger which is born out of the 'quality' of *rajas* and is highly devouring and highly defiling. Understand it to be the enemy here.

Please note that I have translated the word *kāma* in this *ślōka* as 'wishful will'. It means this in the context here, as we shall make out soon. The word has also other significations, such as desire, lust, love and so on. But none of these other significations fits in well with this context. Please notice further that *krōdha* or anger, which is said to be born out of the 'quality' of *rajas* and to be highly devouring and highly defiling, is almost identified with *kāma*, so that the two together are conceived to be the one great enemy of man leading him to sin even in spite of himself. This putting together of the wishfulness of the will with the anger that is highly devouring and highly defiling is due to the fact that the former is usually the sole and unfailingly fertile parent of the latter. The wishfulness of the will owes its very origin to desire and also to aversion, which is the twin-brother of desire; and anger is their common offspring born to help them in asserting their power over all those persons whose will is too weak to resist them. In the course of our study of the second chapter of the *Gītā*, we learnt as you may remember, a little

psychology which is of use to us here also. There we were taught that attachment to the objects of the senses, which manifests itself in the form of desire and aversion, gives rise to *kāma* first and through it to *krōdha* thereafter, and that this *krōdha* leads men to ruin step by step. Using the Sanskrit terminology more fully, we may express the psychology of this position thus:—*saṅga* becomes evident as *rāga* and *dvēsha;* these give birth to *kāma* in the will; and *kāma* produces *krōdha*. Now what we have particularly to bear in mind in connection with this continued process of psychological causation is that the existence of the cause inevitably implies the actual production of the effect. Accordingly, where *kāma* is found, there *krōdha* also is bound to exist. It is this sort of inseparable union in their very existence which makes it possible for them to act conjointly as the one enemy of the earnest and sincere aspirant after the salvation of the soul; and that is why anger is closely identified with the wishful will in this context. It is a well known fact that anger makes people lose completely their power of discrimination; and when this power is lost, there is no knowing whom they may or may not make the object of their anger. It is thus highly devouring, in as much as its very operation tends to destroy the distinction between those who may and those who may not be devoured by it. That anger is highly defiling is even more easily understood. Indeed nothing pollutes the nature of man and spoils the moral and spiritual effectiveness of his life so much as anger. This intimate relation between *kāma* and *krōdha* makes these attributes of the latter applicable to the former also. The more you indulge the wishfulness of the will, the more will it grow in strength and in volume. And the more it grows, the more does it lead men to feel and give vent to anger and to commit sin through it. The statement that *kāma* leads to *krōdha*, which, in its turn, impels people to sin, is true and intelligent enough. But are not *kāma* and *krōdha* included in our *prakṛiti*? That is, do not our wishfulness and anger form a part of our own nature? If they did, Arjuna's idea, that Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teaching regarding the nature as well as the choice of duty made *prakṛiti* herself the impeller of sin, and thus relieved men and women of all moral responsibility in relation to sin, would turn out to be true; and the *ślōka*, which we are now studying, could certainly offer no answer to the question put by

Arjuna. I remember that, when we were studying the mental and moral characteristics of the 'seer of steady wisdom', we made out that fancy leads people more powerfully astray in life than the normal necessities of natural experience. As I put it then, it is the *saṅkalpa* of people which draws them more forcibly away from the right path than their *anubhava*. Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teaching, as given here, implies that obedience to the normal necessities of natural experience can never in itself give rise to sin. On the other hand, it is only those pleasures and pains, which we fancy in our minds and which yet form the basis of our hopes and fears, that lead us to commit sin. Or again, as we have been told, it is only when the will works in slavish obedience to the roving senses, that the wisdom of men is carried away by force even as a ship in the sea is carried away in a stormy gale. Thus it is clear that in the absence of the willing obedience of the mind to the tempting power of the roving senses, there can be no loss of wisdom and no life of sin. That the senses tempt men as badly as they do is undoubtedly a part of the working method of nature. But man's will is given unto him as a spiritual instrument endowed with infinite possibilities of strength with which he may overcome the inimical temptations of the senses. The will is like a mighty sword presented to a soldier with the injunction that it should always be used in self-defence against foes of all sorts. A foolish soldier may use such a well-meant present to maim himself or even to kill himself. Indeed the very fact that we are endowed with a will, which, if it chooses, can decisively conquer the senses and all their temptations, is enough to show that nature does not irresistibly compel men to sin. And the consequent conclusion is that men are themselves responsible for all the sins they commit.

That men sin through the misdirected activity of their will, but not through the normal necessities of natural experience, may be very satisfactorily illustrated by means of one or two examples. For instance, when we feel hungry, our physical nature compels us to eat some food. In so far as this compulsion, this prompting to obtain food and to assimilate it, is concerned, our physical nature is entirely responsible for it. Our very appetite of hunger is the work of nature; it is due, we may say, to the physical exigencies of

our physiological constitution. Thus the appetite is as much caused by nature as the need for its satisfaction is compelled by her. As long as our bodies continue to be built up and maintained in accordance with the existing plan of nature, so long it is impossible for us not to feel hungry. And if, in spite of our feeling hungry, we do not supply food to the body, we certainly cannot manage to live long. Hunger and its satisfaction are in this manner among the normally necessary elements of our nature. Nevertheless, does our nature insist that the satisfaction of our hunger should always be produced by means of the most costly and the most delicious kinds of food? If we satisfy our hunger by means of less costly and less delicious food—which, however, is not on that account the less wholesome or less nutritious—does nature in any manner rebel against such a procedure on our part? On the other hand nature may well feel thankful to us for our choosing to eat such food That our appetite of hunger should be satisfied always with the particular kind of food, which we specially like or do not particularly dislike, is thus no part of the true economy of nature, in relation to us. Similarly, pure cold water can allay our thirst quite as well as costlier beverages containing specially delicious ingredients of various sorts. Yet, if we are given the option to choose between pure cold water and water which is, let us say, mixed with sweet and fragrant rose-syrup, which are we generally apt to choose? Here surely we have not a hard question to answer; the sweetness of the sugar and the fragrance of the rose are both so potent that there can be truly very little difficulty for us either in making the choice or in answering the question. It is very largely in this manner that we have to learn the difference between the promptings of *prakṛiti* and the promptings of *kāma*. It is always possible for us to obey the dictates of nature without wishing to acquire more and more of pleasure or to avoid more and more of pain. It is perfectly possible to live a completely healthy life chiefly on rice and water as we would say, or on bread and water as some others might say; and nature is in no way responsible for our love of syrup or of the spiced delicacies of the culinary art. So long as it is possible for us to supply all the normal needs and obey all the normal promptings of our nature without having to commit sin for such a purpose—so long it cannot surely be nature that compels us to sin. Let us calmly retire for a

moment into the secret confidence of the truth-reflecting interior of our own hearts, and from there endeavour to find out whether sinning is at all necessary for living the wholesome life of normal nature. If there we succeed to any noticeable extent in catching the image of truth, which the heart correctly reflects, we may easily find out thereby the limiting boundary of the sphere within which the normal forces of nature propel all our healthy and inevitable life-activites, and beyond which the abnormal forces of the unwholesomely wishful will operate so as to befoul our lives with sin. As soon as we know this limit beyond which nature ceases to be responsible for the quality and the character of our life-activities, we know also how, whenever we know the better and do the worse, it is indeed never in spite of ourselves that we do so, and how therefore we are ourselves responsible for all the sins we commit under the influence of our own unwholesome and wishful will. Now in concluding our work for to-day let me request you to remember well that what *prakṛiti* demands is mere bread and water, and that the demand for syrup and for spiced delicacies does not come from nature but comes from *kāma*.

XVII

The last subject that we were dealing with in our last class was in reference to the question of how far the character of our life-activities is determined for us by nature and how far we are ourselves responsible for it. For the purpose of understanding well where the impulse of *svabhāva* ends and the impulse of *saṅkalpa* begins in our lives, we took up for consideration the appetites of hunger and thirst and the unavoidable need to satisfy them, so that we might definitely arrive by means of them at the required differentiation between the operations of those impulses. And we arrived at the conclusion that bread and water give a true measure of the responsibility of really natural necessity, and that spiced delicacies and syrup denote the responsibility of our wishful will. Nature compels us to seek bread and to eat bread ; but she certainly does not compel us to seek and to enjoy all the various delicacies of the culinary art. Similarly nature compels us to seek and to drink water ; but she does not compel us to seek or to taste any kind of delicious syrup as a necessary adjunct to the water that we have to drink. It is the love of pleasure and the abhorrence of pain that

make the weak will wishful: and it is the wishfulness of will so produced that makes mankind stray beyond the boundary laid down by nature. We sin only when we stray beyond this boundary and wander about in the limitless fields of pleasing fancy and sense-allurements. The ill-led life of the person, who thus strays beyond the limit of nature, is sure to cause his soul to become more and more subject to the bondage of *karma*, unless through bitter disappointment he learns in time that the endless pursuit of pleasure and power is a mere vanity of vanities, and gives it up so as to keep himself fully within the sphere of operation of the normal forces and influences of kindly nature. To illustrate well this highly important lesson of life, there is an interesting story given in the *Mahābhārata* itself. I refer to the story of Yayāti. He was a great king of the lunar race and is said to have been one of the early ancestors of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas. How far he is a historical personage, or how far he is a cunning creation of the mythical imagination of ancient poetry, we need not discuss now, as such a discussion has really no bearing on the subject of our immediate study. We are now more concerned with the exposition of the moral of his life than with the valuation of its historicity. He is said to have married two wives and to have lived happily with both of them, commanding for a long time their love and their confidence. Each wife then bore two sons for him, and in time this happy father of the four sons began to become old. The coming on of old age evidently made itself manifest to him by the gradual toning down of his own physical vigour and physiological vitality; and as a consequence of such physical enfeeblement and physiological over-ripening, his capacity to enjoy the pleasures of life necessarily became markedly less and less. This old age, however, was not able to produce in him a proportionate decrease in the longing for those pleasures. Indeed, it often happens in the life of those, who are fondly attached to pleasures, that the greater the enfeeblement of their capacity to enjoy them happens to be, the greater becomes the inner intensity of their longing for enjoying them. So an insurmountable dread of old age began to torment poor Yayāti. Then, in a state of mind characterized by deep selfishness and deeper desperation, he went to his eldest son and begged him to exchange his youth in return for his dear father's dreaded old age. That son at once and unhesitatingly declined to comply with the

father's unnatural request. Then the father approached his second son with the same request and found him not in the least willing to be more obliging. Similarly the third son also proved unobliging to the poor disconsolate father. At last, however, the fourth son agreed to oblige him, and the father's old age and this son's youth were readily exchanged. We are not told how this extraordinary exchange was actually effected. That, of course, is a minor matter in so far as our present purpose in concerned. Soon enough the father with his borrowed youth began to live his former life of pleasure with his wonted zest. But unhappily for him even this borrowed youth showed unmistakable signs of gradually growing into old age; and before it was really too late he became convinced through repeated experience that youth cannot be ever-lasting and that old age is inevitable. He then gave back with a blessing to his kind and obliging last son the unexpended remainder of his youth, and in re-taking his own old age from him he declared—

न जातु कामः कामानामुपभोगेन शाम्यते ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥

In this manner he was enabled to arrive at the conviction that 'desire is never appeased by the enjoyment of the objects of desire, but is made to increase all the more as fire is through sacrificial offerings'. When love of pleasure finds its way into the will and holds it in subjection, as it happened for a long time in the case of Yayāti, then *kāma* or the wishfulness of the will soon becomes unbounded. Much like fire, the more that wishfullness is fed the more it burns. Experience, however, may teach wisdom, as it did unto Yayāti; and then the living of the unselfish and sinless life may easily be found to be well accordant with nature. Accordingly, Yayāti's life, as described in the *Mahābhārata*, is appropriately illustrative of the ethical teaching that it is no part of man's inevitable nature to burn with passion, and that indeed he never sins under what may be called natural compulsion, but does so only when his own wishful will through its weakness leads him astray. How the weak will with its irrepressible wishfulness tempts men to sin, may be learnt from the first two among the *ślōkas* which we have to study to-day. Those two are—

धूमेनाव्रियते वह्निर्यथादर्शो मलेन च ।
यथोल्बेनावृतो गर्भस्तथा तेनेदमावृतम् ॥ ३८ ॥
आवृतं ज्ञानमेतेन ज्ञानिनो नित्यवैरिणा ।
कामरूपेण कौन्तेय दुष्पूरेणानलेन च ॥ ३९ ॥

38. In the manner in which fire is covered over by smoke and a mirror by dirt, in the manner in which the fœtus in the womb is covered over by the sac, in that (same) manner is (the whole of) this (world) covered over by that (*kāma*).

39. O Arjuna, (all) wisdom (here) is covered over by this constant enemy of the wise man—(the enemy) in the form of the *kāma*, which is indeed an insatiable flame.

When fire is covered over by smoke, the very luminosity of the fire becomes hidden therein. When a mirror is covered over with dust and dirt, it loses the power of producing reflected images and thus ceases to be a mirror. So long as the fœtus in the womb is within the embryonal sac, it cannot as yet be said to have made a beginning to live its own independent life, as then its life still forms a part of the mother's life. Moreover, we have to note in connection with such a fœtus that it is quite completely covered over by the membrane of the sac. This completeness of the covering is surely a noteworthy point in relation to the way in which the whole of this world is conceived to be covered over by *kāma*. The essential virtue of fire is made useless by the darkening envelopment of smoke, even as the very character of a mirror as mirror is undone by a coating of dust and dirt; and the fœtus within the sac has no independent life of its own. Now, when the world, which is enveloped in desire and wishfulness, is compared to these, what does the comparison imply? It seems to me that, what is intended to be brought out by this comparison is that whatever happens to be the virtue of the essential life of

reality in this world of ours,—that is apt to be fully obscured by the opaque and unilluminable covering of *kāma*. In other words, this comparison means that the desire-prompted wishfulness of the will leads the life of the spirit to become wholly buried beneath the heavy load of the mis-guiding life of the flesh, so that men are thereby led to forget that they have such a thing as a soul at all to save. This very unwholesome result is accomplished by the wishful will preventing the free play and the easy spread of the light of wisdom. The idea here seems to be that true wisdom and the wishfulness of the will cannot co-exist in the same person. We have learnt to see how that wisdom alone is true which makes the salvation of the soul shine out as the highest and the worthiest object of attainment. It is always an essential part of such a wisdom to see that unselfishness is the only means by which it is possible to accomplish the salvation of the soul. The life of selfishness and worldly attachment can never be the proper life for the spiritual aspirant; and the pleasure-prompted wishfulness of the will cannot make life anything other than selfish and worldly. It is for this reason that *kāma* happens to be the constant enemy of the wise man. It displaces his wisdom and fills the vacated heart with selfish and worldly longings, which grow the more in volume and in intensity the longer they are allowed to remain therein. And the displaced wisdom very soon finds it exceedingly hard to return to the heart from which it was forced out, for the simple reason that in that heart there is no longer any room available for the accommodation of wisdom and righteous unselfishness. You see how all this amounts to saying that selfishness is at the bottom of sinfulness. Selfish love of pleasure and power gives rise to the wishful will. This undermines the wisdom of even the wise man, so as to make him ignore the life of the soul in his zeal for living freely and fully the ever tempting and never blessed life of the body. Since nature does not irresistibly compel people to be selfish, she cannot be held responsible for their tendency to sin. We have therefore to make out the basis of their common propensity to selfishness before deciding finally who is really responsible for the sinfulness of their lives. This knowledge of wherein their selfish propensity is really rooted, is further calculated to be helpful to us in enabling us to learn how we may withstand the tendency to sin in life. Accordingly, the

basis of *kāma* and the manner in which it works mischief are both explained in the next *ślōka* thus :—

इन्द्रियाणि मनो बुद्धिरस्याधिष्ठानमुच्यते ।
एतैर्विमोहयत्येष ज्ञानमावृत्य देहिनम् ॥ ४० ॥

40. The basis of this (*kāma*) is said to be the senses, the *manas* and the intellect. With the aid of these it envelops wisdom all around and thereafter deludes the soul.

The senses are, as you know, the organs of perception. I have already drawn your attention to the fact that the Sanskrit word *manas* is not always equivalent to the English word 'mind', and that in connection with the theory of perception known to ancient Hindu psychology it means the internal organ or faculty of attention. For this reason *manas* is often spoken of as the *antarindriya* or the inner organ of perception. And *buddhi* is the faculty of intellection. Thus the faculties of sense-perception, mental attention and intellection are here declared to form the foundation of *kāma*. The meaning of this statement is simple enough. It is when the senses perceive their objects that the sensations of pleasure and pain arise. We become cognisant of the perception-side as well as of the sensation-side of the functions of our senses only when our attention is internally directed to them. Inattention and absent-mindedness on the part of the perceiving person make the senses fail as instruments of knowledge and experience. Therefore the senses require the co-operation of the *manas* before they give rise to pleasure or pain. The experience so produced and the perceptions so gathered in have all to be well put into shape as an ordered whole before they may produce *kāma* and make the will wishful. If each of our sensations remained a completely isolated factor in our entire experience, it would be impossible for us to arrive at anything like a law of association between them and their objects, and we would not surely be able to know beforehand whether the sensory perception of a particular object—such, for instance, as a crystal of sugar—would give rise to pleasure or to pain. The taste

of sugar once experienced would be of no use to indicate to us what that taste would be like on another occasion ; and hence it would be impossible for us to conceive the general idea that sugar is sweet as forming a part of our assured knowledge. For the purpose of moulding sensory experience into such knowledge, the intellect has to sift and to sort all our sensations and perceptions so as to enable us to arrive well and easily at all those laws of association, in accordance with which the mind usually operates in the process of acquiring well-formed knowledge. Without the conception of generalised ideas,—that is, without the ability to know, for instance, that sugar is in general sweet and that quinine is in general bitter,—wishfulness in the will cannot certainly arise. Unless the faculty of intellection performs its function, experience can never be put into shape as an ordered whole, but will ever have to be in a state of chaotic confusion. When we do not know beforehand which concourse of experiential occurrences is calculated to give rise to pleasure and which to pain, the will has no means whereby it may contract and give direction to wishfulness. An undirected wishfulness of the will is clearly a contradiction in terms, in so far as all sanely psychological lives are concerned. Therefore, without the due exercise of the faculties of sense-perception, mental attention and intellection, it is never possible for the will to become wishful. Hence it is these faculties that constitute the basis of *kāma*, that is, of volitional wishfulness. Thus the very origin of the wishfulness of the will is dependent upon these faculties, although it is true enough that, even in spite of the normally full and free exercise of all these faculties, it is quite possible for the will not to become selfishly wishful. After all, it is the will that determines the aim of life—whether that aim is to be the securing of personal advantages in the form of pleasure or power or profit, or whether it has to be the service of man and the salvation of the soul. There can be no doubt as to which of these two alternatives the wise man will elect in choosing his own aim of life. He will certainly prefer, I believe, the service of man and the salvation of the soul to pleasure and power and profit. All his faculties will become effective aids to him in carrying out well what his own chosen aim of life is, namely, the service of man for winning thereby the salvation of the soul. Indeed it is therein that the true power

of his wisdom lies. He does not forget that *mōksha* alone can be his *parama-purushārtha*. Nor is he ever apt to ignore the well established efficiency of the loving service of man as a means for the attainment of this supreme purpose of the salvation of the soul. Whoever disregards the salvation of the soul as the true aim of life, and thereby disregards also the service of man as the means best suited to secure that aim, he surely cannot be a wise man. Such a man is apt to make pleasure, power and profit serve as the aims of his life. We know now how, in so doing, he is only strengthening his bondage of *karma* and putting off indefinitely the day of the deliverance of his soul. The unwisdom of this course of life is as patent as the wisdom of that other course of life, which aims at securing the deliverance of the soul by means of the unselfish service of man and the unattached performance of duty. We may thus see how *kāma* prevents wisdom from directing life aright along the path of unselfish service to the goal of the soul's salvation. I believe I have made it sufficiently clear to you how the faculties of sense-perception, mental attention and intellection constitute the combined source from which this *kāma* arises so as to despoil the power of wisdom to serve as the true guide of life. When these faculties are allowed to produce *kāma*, and when the *kāma*, so produced, envelopes the light of wisdom all around so as to make life itself miss its true aim, what then happens in reality is that the soul is deprived of its chances of salvation. It is in this manner that *kāma* deludes the soul with the aid of the faculties of sense-perception, mental attention and intellection. After thus pointing out how *kāma* acts as the cause of sin, Śrī-Kṛishṇa went on naturally to teach to Arjuna the way in which this sin-engendering *kāma* might be conquered; and that is what we find mentioned in the next *ślōka*,

तस्मात्त्वमिन्द्रियाण्यादौ नियम्य भरतर्षभ ।

पाप्मानं प्रजहि ह्येनं ज्ञानविज्ञाननाशनम् ॥ ४१ ॥

41. Therefore do you, O Arjuna, control the senses in the beginning, and destroy this sinful thing which is the destroyer of (all) knowledge and wisdom.

Since *kāma* is the cause of sin, Arjuna was asked to cast it off, so that he might thereby get rid of the tendency to sin. Please observe that *kāma*, which is the cause of sin, is itself spoken of here as *pāpman*, that is, as a sinful thing. This transferred application of the attribute of sinfulness to *kāma*, which is the cause of sin, is natural enough, inasmuch as the operation of the cause is ever responsible for the production of the effect. This characterisation of *kāma* as a sinful thing is also meant to convey to us the intensity of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's disapprobation of it; and the reason why he so very strongly disapproved of it is evidently because it is apt to destroy all knowledge and wisdom. How *kāma* destroys both knowledge and wisdom, we have already been given to understand. You all know that the wishfulness of the will is markedly prone to fill the mind with bias and with predispositions of all sorts; and the fact that wish is father to the thought is a matter of daily observation in human life. Can the mind which is swayed by prejudices and predilections get at the transparent and absolutely colourless impartiality of the truth as it really is? Can knowledge, which is not based on the apprehension of such truth, be called knowledge at all? Surely that knowledge, which lies and misleads, is no knowledge; and hence *kāma* is undoubtedly a destroyer of knowledge. Although the possession of knowledge may not always give rise to true wisdom in the possessor, still there can be no doubt regarding the incompatibility of wisdom with ignorance. Of course the man of knowledge may not always be a man of wisdom; but the man of ignorance is generally bound to be a man of unwisdom. The selfishly wishful will, which aims at the acquisition of pleasure and power, makes the very purpose of life deviate from the right path of truth and wisdom to the path of untruth and unwisdom. No unwisdom can indeed be more harmful and unwise, than that which makes an unworthy aim take the place of the supreme purpose of life. We can no longer have any doubt as to the very great unwisdom of losing the soul, even though in losing it one may gain the whole world. What *kāma* does is that it stimulates the foolish endeavour to gain the world at the certain risk of having to lose the soul therefor. That is how *kāma* destroys wisdom. There is therefore no room for wonder in thinking or in speaking of that, which thus destroys both knowledge and wisdom, as a sinful thing.

Please note that we are informed here that this *kāma* may be cast off by controlling the senses in the beginning. It is easy enough to understand why this controlling of the senses is recommended to be practised at the very beginning. We have seen that, in regard to our living the higher life of the spirit, the greatest obstacle arises from the tendencies of the flesh, and that these tendencies have their root in the pleasures of the senses. We have also seen that the only means, by which we can baffle the allurements of the senses, is a truly wise and well-guided exercise of our will-power. Thus the struggle between the lower life of the flesh and the higher life of the spirit resolves itself into a trial of power between the tempting senses on the one hand and the resisting will on the other. It is a very widely known experience among men of all countries and of all classes that, the more they give way to their enemies, the more do those enemies take advantage of them. It is indeed a common law of nature that, when one out of two opposing forces begins to yield in the stress of mutual opposition, it is steadily overpowered more and more by the other force till at last the opposition itself is vanquished altogether. The senses have a tendency to pull down the life of man to the lower level of the flesh; and it is the will that has to pull it up to the higher level of the spirit. Here are therefore two opposing forces, to which human life is subjected owing to the very necessities of its constitution; and as soon as the will shows signs of giving way, the senses are sure to begin to be effectively aggressive. Then in no very long time it becomes the habit of the will to yield and to retreat and of the senses to be aggressive and assertive, so that in the end the will almost ceases to exist, and the man is made into a bond-slave of the senses. Accordingly it is clear that, unless the power of the will is safe-guarded from the very beginning in the contest between it and the senses, it is apt to be weakened so as almost to be destroyed. The destruction of the sin-engendering *kāma* is possible only through the effective exercise of the power of the will; and the very effectiveness of man's will-power is, as we have seen, dependent upon its steady and wakeful control of the senses from the beginning. But are the senses constitutionally capable of being controlled by the will? Is the natural relation between the will and the senses such as makes the control of the latter by the former actually possible? These are certainly very proper questions to ask in this connection. And if

the answer to them be in the negative, the sinful thing *kāma* would be quite unconquerable. Here in the next *ślōka* we have, however, a descripton of the gradation, so to say, of the seats of power as they are found within our psychological domain; and a careful study of it will enable us to see what position the will occupies in that gradation, and how it is naturally possible for the will to control the senses.

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥ ४२ ॥

42. They say that the senses are supreme. But beyond the senses, the *manas* is supreme. Beyond the *manas*, the intellect is supreme. But what is (even) beyond the intellect is 'that'.

In our endeavour to understand well the meaning of this *ślōka*, we cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that it is intended to demonstrate to us the possibility of that sense-control, which has been declared to be the only means by which men may conquer their sin-engendering *kāma*. The relative position of superiority, which is assigned to the senses and to the other things mentioned in this *ślōka*, is obviously in reference to their controllability. The thought contained in this *ślōka* is, as some of you may know, expressed in two different contexts in almost the same language in that very interestingly psychological and metaphysical *Upanishad* known as the *Kaṭhōpanishad*. And in a commentary on this *Upanishad*, the relative superiority of the various things mentioned in those two passages is explained to rest on the controlling power, which each of them possesses in relation to some other thing that is shown to be psychologically connected with it. Accordingly the supremacy of the senses is based upon their commonly apparent uncontrollability. The statement, that the senses are supreme, does not mean here that they are absolutely uncontrollable; for we are told immediately that the supremacy of the *manas* transcends that of the senses. This superior supremacy of the *manas*—which we have understood to be the faculty of attention—implies that the senses are controllable by the

manas. When again the supremacy of the faculty of intellection is said to transcend the supremacy of the faculty of attention, the meaning likewise is that the faculty of attention is controllable by the faculty of intellection. Similarly it is conceived that, as mentioned in this *ślōka*, there is a certain something denoted here by the word *that*, which is in its turn capable of controlling the faculty of intellection. If we bear in mind that the supremacy of the controller transcends the supremacy of the controlled, and that it is possible for what happens to be the controlled in relation to some one thing to be at the same time the controller in relation to some other thing, there will be no great difficulty in understanding that gradation of superiority which is described in this *ślōka*. We have already seen how the senses are effectively controlled by the faculty of attention. Without the co-operation of the *manas*, the senses can neither perceive objects nor produce the sensations of pleasure and pain. When, with the aid of the *manas*, they give rise to perceptions and sensations, they so overpower the mind of the weak man as to appear to be uncontrollable. Still, no sooner do we take away the *manas* from the senses, than they cease to be suitable instruments of knowledge and experience. Accordingly the *manas* can and does control the senses; and its supremacy therefore transcends that of the senses. Now, is it equally true that the faculty of intellection controls the faculty of attention? Otherwise, the supremacy of the *buddhi*, that is, of the faculty of intellection, cannot be said to transcend the supremacy of the *manas*. The one fact, which at once unfolds for us the relation between the *manas* and the *buddhi*, is that it is in the very nature of attention to be ordinarily purposive. Such a thing as undirected attention is in general a psychological impossibility. It is the will that directs the attention; but it is the faculty of intellection that points out to the will the object towards which it has to direct the attention. Consequently the *manas* cannot co-operate with the senses, unless it is itself directed by the intellect first and is then stimulated to act by the will next. If the intellect does not operate upon what the senses and the faculty of attention have together produced in us in the form of experience, then all our experience can really be of no use to us in giving direction or guidance to the psychological life of our

consciousness. To illustrate how this is, let us take the example of an ordinarily insane man. The mental defect in his case is not generally in connection with his sensations and perceptions. His senses are usually normal in their operations. He sees and hears and smells and tastes as most sane people do. Since in this manner his senses are seen to give rise to normal sensations in him, his *manas* or faculty of attention must be also normally active in him in connection with the production of his sensations and perceptions. What he sees or hears at any moment, he realises well enough during that moment. But he cannot well classify and retain his sensory experiences; he can neither associate nor dissociate them with all such things as are for such a purpose suitably related to them. There is rarely anything in the whole field of the experience of the mad man which is uniformly calculated to make his life normally purposive and useful. Although attention and mental concentration are directly under the control of the will, still it is the intellect which makes the operation of the will rational and consistent with all the ordinary laws of nature. We may indeed say that the faculty of attention is subject to a sort of double control, seeing that it is dependent upon the will for motive force and upon the intellect for rational guidance. It must be now clear that, so long as our attention is apt to be led or guided in any manner by our intellect, the faculty of intellection is bound to transcend in respect of supremacy the faculty of attention. In other words, beyond the *manas* the *buddhi* is supreme.

And what is that other thing, which is in this *ślōka* denoted by the Sanskrit word meaning *that*, and is declared to be even beyond the *buddhi* in point of supremacy? The first idea that naturally suggests itself to us in this context as an answer to this question is that the will is in all probability what is intended to be denoted here by the word *that*. In so understanding this thing, which is said to be superior to *buddhi*, there is nothing which is in any way inconsistent with truth; for the will is in fact the one main channel through which the power of the mind is let out and made to flow in various directions. It is thus the will that stimulates attention and sustains mental concentration. Moreover, attention is needed for the production of perceptions and sensations, quite as

much as mental concentration is required for the work of recollection. Thus our memory and our perceptions and sensations are all made alive and active by means of the will ultimately. Indeed it must be self-evident to most of you that the operations of the intellect are always prevalent in relation to both directly experienced and remembered sensations and perceptions. Consequently the life of the intellect also is notably dependent upon the power of the will. We know that careful and impartial observation bears out very well the old and oft-repeated proposition that in human experience the wish is too often father to the thought; and this shows to us another manner in which also the intellect is apt to be controlled by the will. Accordingly, it is the will that ultimately electrifies every limb of the mind into lively and energetic action; and hence it may very well be held to be supreme even beyond the *buddhi*. But, in the light of the *ślōka* here, that thing, which is declared to transcend the intellect, is evidently a certain something, which is incapable of being transcended; and the transcendence of the will cannot surely be said to be so supreme. I have advisedly spoken of the will as the main channel of mental power, in as much as the whole of the conscious flow of that power takes place through it. A channel of power necessarily requires a fountain of power above its origin, as otherwise there can be no power at all to flow through the channel. So long as the power flowing through the channel is dependent upon the power springing up from the fountain, we cannot say that the transcendence of the will-channel of power is so supreme as to be incapable of being excelled. Such transcendence can be attributed only to the fountain of power, even though it happens to be hidden behind what may be conceived as the plane of our awareness. We may be unaware of its existence; still it must be there as certainly as we have the will. There can and need be no channel of power, if there be no fountain of power. Who that knows can deny that the channel of power is bound to be under the control of the source of power? Since such a source of ultimate power in the sphere of our mental life can alone be the absolutely uncontrollable controller, as we may so very well make out by personal experience and by reasoning, the word *that* in this context can denote nothing other than such a source of power. Moreover, in the two passages in the *Kaṭhōpanishad*, to which

your attention has already been drawn, that thing the supremacy whereof is said to transcend that of the intellect is distinctly declared to be the soul. In one place in this *Upanishad* (III. 10.) we find the statement बुद्धेरात्मा महान् परः ; and in the other place (VI. 7.) the same idea is expressed as सत्त्वादधि महानात्मा, wherein सत्त्व is interpreted to mean the same thing as बुद्धि. In both these instances महान् आत्मा naturally means 'the great soul'; and the greatness which is attributed here to the soul is explained to be due to its being the uncontrollable controller in the whole sphere of man's mental experience. When, according to the *Kaṭhōpanishad*, it is this uncontrollably great soul that transcends the intellect in point of supremacy, it is rather strange to have to believe that, according to the *Bhagavad-gītā*, which in more than one place is very closely similar to that *Upanishad* in thought as well as in language, something else may be conceived to be that principle which transcends the intellect in power. Consequently that which transcends the intellect in point of power and supremacy cannot indeed be any thing other than the soul. This interpretation of the word *that* is, as we shall soon see, in very good agreement with the true meaning of the next *ślōka* also. Indeed it would be hard to make out the meaning of the next *ślōka* rationally, if it be not granted that what transcends the intellect in point of power is really the soul.

Just as I am finishing the exposition of the meaning of this very meaningful *ślōka*, I am reminded of a statement, which I made to you in one of our previous classes, that the reality of the soul is proved in the *Gītā* by means of the two processes of psychological experimentation and analytical reasoning. The experimental process is in the practice of what is often called *ashṭāṅgayōga*. In the *Gītā* this seems to be denoted by the name of *dhyānayōga*, probably for the reason that *dhyāna* or meditation is the most important among the eight requisite elements of this process of psychological experimentation. It is also often spoken of simply as *yōga*. The aim of this experiment is to make the experimenter get into that state of extreme mental concentration which we know by the Sanskrit name of *samādhi*. The *yōgin* in the state of *samādhi* is not at all responsive to stimulations from outside; he is, as it were, dead to almost all external influences. Yet this irresponsiveness of his does not justify

us in coming to the conclusion that he has become so absolutely mindless as to be unconscious even of his own existence. On the other hand, the result of the experiment is shown to prove that, in spite of this irresponsiveness, his consciousness even then not only continues unimpaired as consciousness, but also exhibits anew certain latent supra-normal powers. Such an apprehension of pure consciousness and its exalted powers,in association with a low state of physiological vitality and an almost absolute irresponsiveness to outer stimulations, is well calculated to establish the independent reality of whatever happens to be the basis of the mind in the inner life of all human beings. In other words, the crucial test of the reality of the soul is to be found in the successful practice of *yōga* so as to arrive at the state of *samādhi*. Yāmunāchārya, otherwise known in Tamil as Ālavandār, has in fact declared in his *Siddhitraya* that the reality of the soul can be most incontrovertibly established only with the aid of the practice of *yōga*. Since this Yāmunacharya was a well-known teacher of Vedāntic Vaishṇavism in Southern India in the early days of the great Rāmānujāchārya, we may safely come to the conclusion that the old position of the *Kaṭhōpanishad* and of Patañjali, regarding the value of the practice of *yōga* as affording the best proof of the soul, has been held to be absolutely true and has hence been honoured in this country for hundreds of years. The other process, by which we arrive at the proof of the soul, is dependent upon psychological analysis and reasoning ; and that is evidently given in the *ślōka*, the full import of which we have now been endeavouring to understand. It is easy to see that, when our sense-organs feel and perceive, when our faculty of attention is steadily attentive, when our intellect classifies and generalises our mental contents actively and effectively,—even then something more is wanted to integrate and account for our experiences satisfactorily in all their varied aspects. We all feel, for instance, that our experiences are really ours. I have certainly no doubt that my experience is actually mine. In fact this sense of mineness in relation to my experience is something without which I cannot at all conceive myself as a being. Similarly every one of you has, I am sure, such a sense of mineness in relation to your own experiences. Moreover, I feel that my personality—that which is denoted by the word 'I' in relation to myself— is not different to-day and in this place from what it was

yesterday and in another place. Again many such things as were experienced by us at other times and in other places are generally seen to form part of our knowledge now and here. Can the senses, the faculty of attention and the faculty of intellection severally or together account for this aspect of our experience? When the senses and the faculties of attention and intellection perform their functions fully and in due harmony, all that we can have is only that kind of experience which is directed and rationalised from moment to moment. To unify these various momentary experiences, which are thus directed and rationalised, we require first of all the faculty of memory and also the instinctive conviction of self-evident certainty in regard to the rememberer of past experiences being in each of us the same as the enjoyer of present experiences. It is in no way inconsistent with reason for the receiver of the impressions of experience to be the same as the reviver of those impressions, in as much as the revived impressions are all felt as such by the receiver himself, who is at the same time conscious that he is himself their reviver also. It is in fact this unifying foundation of consciousness which forms the true source of our sense of individuality and of all our inner power. We have all along been calling it by the name of the soul. It is the supremacy of this soul that has been declared to transcend even the supremacy of the intellect. You know, as well as I do, that there are certain well-known schools of philosophy which deny altogether the existence of the soul. It has been, however, an old contention in Hindu philosophic thought that, without the postulation of the soul as the foundation of the underlying unity of man's mental life, the psychological process of recognition becomes inexplicable. The sentence सोऽयं देवदत्तः—'This is that Dēvadatta'—is the commonly given illustrative example of the process of recognition; and here the Dēvadatta that was seen on a former occasion in a different place is identified with the Dēvadatta who is being seen now and here. The senses and the faculties of attention and intellection are quite capable of accounting separately for each of these two cognitions of Dēvadatta. But they cannot in themselves account for the identification of the object of the earlier cognition with that of the later one. The very possibility of this identification implies an enduring permanence as well as reality in relation to what may aptly be conceived as the

mental canvas on which all our cognitive pictures are painted; and recognition further requires that this enduring mental canvas should be endowed with self-consciousness so as to be able to cognise and to compare all those cognitive pictures. To grant these things is obviously the same thing as to grant the existence of the soul. Even that interpretation of this *ślōka*, which makes the will that gives lodgement to *kāma* transcend the *buddhi*, may well be shown to be fully capable of offering a real proof of the soul, since the will merely makes manifest the hidden power of the soul within. If, as I have once before declared, a thorough examination of the nature as well as of the basis of memory is in itself abundantly capable of demonstrating the reality of the soul, a similar examination of the will, as the innermost faculty of mental initiative and control, is even better calculated to give us the same demonstration of reality in relation to the soul. The popular identification of the visible head-channel of power with the invisible source of power, of which it is such a channel, is neither strangely uncommon nor entirely unintelligible. In any case it is evident that we have in this *ślōka* such a proof of the soul as rests on logical reasoning and psychological analysis. The next *ślōka*, which is the last one in this chapter, tells us how the knowledge of this process of reasoning and analysis may be utilised by us in conquering the inimical *kāma* so as to make our lives perfectly pure and sinless.

एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥ ४३ ॥

43. Thus realising that which is (supreme) beyond the intellect, and (then) steadying the soul by means of the soul (itself), strike down, O mighty-armed Arjuna, the enemy in the form of *kāma* that is difficult (even) to be approached (in conflict).

It clearly comes out from this *ślōka* that the realisation of that which is beyond the intellect is helpful to us in the endeavour to steady the soul by means of the soul. To steady the soul is evidently to prevent it from wavering, when it is subjected to the trial of the alluring temptations of the senses; and this work of

steadying the soul is here conceived to be possible only by means of the power of the soul. Let us in passing observe that this fact of the realisation of what is supreme beyond the intellect being considered to be helpful to us in the work of steadying the soul by means of the soul, is of itself calculated to point out that the thing, which is supreme beyond the intellect, is no other than the soul itself. If the senses are controlled by the faculty of attention, and if the faculty of attention is in its turn subject to the control of the faculty of intellection, and if again there is a certain something which transcends this faculty of intellection in point of supremacy so as to keep even that under control, then this something must necessarily be, as we have already seen, an uncontrolled controller. Very naturally such an uncontrolled controller has, whenever it may happen to be necessary to control it, to be controlled by itself. That is evidently why we are told here that the soul has to be steadied by means of the power of the soul itself. The knowledge of these graded centres of control in our mental life, as they have been stated in the previous *ślōka*, makes it evident that the failure of man's spiritual self-control is invariably due to such centres of control failing to exercise their power aright. When the master is indifferent regarding the assertion of his own authority, the servant is sure to usurp it quite freely and fearlessly. This, almost every one among us knows. Such an occurrence is not impossible or uncommon in the psychological world of human life. When *manas*, the faculty of attention, neglects to exercise its due control over the senses, what happens is that the senses become so powerful as often to force this faculty to work as a slave. In effect the *manas* comes to be controlled by the senses. Such an enslavement of the *manas* leads to the enslavement of the *buddhi* or intellect also, in as much as the mental material which the *buddhi* has to handle is supplied to it through the already enslaved *manas*. This degradation of the *buddhi* is notably analogous to the moral degradation which comes upon all those who are fated to be masters of slaves. A master of slaves may be so very rigid and inflexibly formal in what he considers to be the firm exercise of his authority as to deserve very well the reputation of a tyrannical task-master; and yet even in his case it surely cannot fail to be as true as ever that at heart the tyrant is indeed in no way better than the slave. The *buddhi* of a man may very

well operate firmly according to strictly logical laws and regulations. Still it cannot of itself keep him from the clutches of the enemy *kāma*, so long as his *manas* happens to be enslaved by the senses. The result in the long run is that the natural gradation of the centres of psychological power in man becomes thereby reversed. Then, instead of prestige and power rising step by step from the senses to the faculty of attention, from the faculty of attention to the faculty of intellection, and then from the faculty of intellection to that which is supreme even beyond it, this last thing itself, which is the highest centre of power, becomes subject to the intellect or *buddhi* which is enslaved by the *manas*, which again is in its turn enslaved by the senses. Thus the insurmountably supreme mastery of mental power is made to pass away from the heart of the soul to the senses. When a man's mind has come to this pass, there need be no wonder that in relation to him the enemy *kāma* becomes too dangerous even to approach in conflict. When the mechanism of mental control becomes disorganised thus, who can withstand the strong enchantment of the alluring magic of *kāma*? All those, into whose heart *kāma* is making its way, are sure to be overpowered more and more by its magic spell, as its approach to the heart becomes nearer and nearer. It is therefore that there is more danger in trying to meet the enemy *kāma* in conflict, than in working to see that such an enemy does not arise at all. To prevent the very birth of this inimical *kāma* in us, we have to take care that our mechanism of internal mental control is not in the least disorganised. That is, we have to see that our senses are kept completely under the control of our faculty of attention, that the faculty of attention is fully obedient to the faculty of intellection, and that this latter faculty is itself well controlled ultimately by the will-power of the soul. Otherwise our spiritual strength to resist the promptings of the flesh cannot be safe-guarded, and our endeavour to live the sinless life is certain to prove futile. Even as the way to self-realisation is through self-conquest, the way to self-conquest is through self-control. It is undoubtedly in this light that the practical aspect of the philosophy of conduct, as taught by Śrī-Kṛishṇa, presents itself to all sincerely earnest and enquiring students; and it is worthwhile to observe how the exposition of this practical aspect of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's philosophy of conduct, as taught

to Arjuna in this third chapter of the *Gītā*, shows that that practical aspect is itself eminently fitted to serve as a means for verifying the ultimate speculative basis of that same philosophy of conduct. The whole theory of His ethical philosophy is based, as we have learnt already, on the undying reality of the soul; and the living of the ethical life, which is in consonance with this theory and is in fact deducible from it, has now been shown to be also well capable of demonstrating the reality of the soul. Thus is the truth of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's philosophy of conduct verified by a double test; and there can therefore be no real justification of any kind for any faltering of faith on our part in respect of the value and worthiness of the important ethical and religious lessons which were so kindly and so earnestly taught by Him to Arjuna.

Here ends the third chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. This chapter goes by the name of *Karma-yōga*, which implies that in it there is to be found an exposition of the nature and the value of *karma* or work, as an essential element in all well-lived lives, and as an efficient and appropriate means for the attainment of that emancipation of the soul which has already been shown to us to be the highest good. Yāmunāchārya, to whom I have already referred, thus summarises the teachings given in this chapter:—

असक्त्या लोकरक्षायै गुणेष्वारोप्य कर्तृताम् ।
सर्वेश्वरे वा न्यस्योक्ता तृतीये कर्मकार्यता ॥

This means that we are taught in the third chapter the necessity for the doing of work without any selfish attachment to results, but so as to secure the welfare of the world, it being understood that the required freedom from such attachment has to be obtained from realising that true agency in relation to all work belongs either to the 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* or to God Himself. We have already seen how well such a conclusion comes out from this chapter. You may remember how, in giving a summary of the teachings contained in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, I pointed out to you that in it we have the presentation of the ground-plan of the whole work. In that chapter the great problem of the philosophy of conduct is examined from the speculative as well as from the practical standpoint. The speculative and theoretical aspect of the philosophy of conduct has

been, as you know, denoted by the word *sāṅkhya*, while its practical aspect has been named *yōga*. The *sāṅkhya* analysis of the problem of conduct led us, you may remember, to the position that the liberation of the soul from the bondage of matter is indeed the highest good at which all ethically directed conduct has to aim. The bondage of matter limits the freedom as well as the power of the soul; and this bondage is itself due to the transmitted internal impress of bondage-compelling *karma*, which is the outcome of the activities of the embodied soul in its previous states of embodiment. Accordingly, it is the *samskāra* of *karma*, that is finally responsible for the imprisonment of the otherwise free and unlimited soul in matter; and the soul's imprisonment in matter is therefore frequently enough spoken of rightly as the bondage of *karma*. The pollution of the soul by the *samskāra* of *karma* being in this way the cause of its imprisonment in matter, it follows as a matter of course that the liberation of the soul from the bondage of matter can be most effectively accomplished by getting rid of this *samskāra* of *karma* altogether. That state in which the embodied soul may well be seen to be wholly unaffected by the *samskāra* of *karma*, and which has necessarily to precede the bound soul's final liberation from the bondage of matter,—that state goes by the name of *naishkarmya*. To reach this state of *naishkarmya* is thus the preliminary step by which the desired end of *mōksha* has to be climbed up to; and so the practical part of Srī-Kṛishṇa's philosophy of conduct consists first in our learning how this needed state of *naishkarmya* may be attained and then in actually attaining it. Since the activity exhibited in the form of work by the embodied soul is the real source of its *samskāra* of *karma*, it may be easily and at once argued that the readiest way of becoming completely free from the bondage of *karma* is to adopt the life of absolute inaction. Although there is indeed very straight logic in this position, there is in it also much want of wisdom and want of insight into truth. It is with the object of enabling Arjuna to avoid safely this logical pitfall, that Śrī-Kṛishṇa laid special emphasis on the fact that, in so far as the creation of the *samskāra* of *karma* is concerned, the motive of the worker is a more potent factor than the work that he does. The attached mind with the inactive body is in fact as apt to create the binding *samskāra* of *karma*, as the active body with the unattached mind is capable of

removing all such impressed influences of *karma* as tend to prolong the imprisonment of the soul in matter. This greater potency of motive as the creator of *karma* can in no way weaken the absolute obligatoriness of the duty of work. Arjuna's failure to grasp this truth well is at the bottom of the digression which makes up the whole of this third chapter of the *Gītā*. He obviously thought that, by merely taking care of the motive so as to make it unattached and unselfish, the goal of the soul's salvation could easily be reached, whether the life lived happened to be one of work or of no work, and whatever might be the nature of the work, which, if at all, was therein performed by the worker. It is therefore no wonder that Śrī-Kṛishṇa's insistence on Arjuna doing a particular kind of duty and living the life of a particular form of activity appeared to him to be inconsistent with what he had wrongly understood to be the trend of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teaching. Where the unselfish and unattached purity of the motive is conceived to be in itself competent to justify either absolute inaction or the entire absence of all choice in relation to the work that has to be done in life,—it is there utterly impossible to have any idea of obligation in relation to the living of the life of work, or in relation to particular duties having to be performed by particular individuals. It is in this light that Arjuna evidently requested Śrī-Kṛishṇa to make His teaching clearer and less confusing.

In complying with the request of Arjuna, the first thing that Śrī-Kṛishṇa did was to point out to him that it is inadmissible to judge the conduct of men either from the standpoint of motive alone or from the standpoint of action alone; because motive and action are, in respect of the conduct of embodied beings, incapable of being so isolated in practice as to permit their separate valuation. It is impossible for any embodied being to live the life of absolute inaction, for the very *prakṛiti* of his embodiment compels him to live a life of work. The life of work being thus inevitable, the idea that the state of worklessness gives rise to freedom from the bondage of *karma* ceases altogether to have any practical value. So long as the condition of absolute worklessness is impossible in relation to embodied beings, the most important problem of practical ethics can be nothing other than to see how the life of work

may be freed from its common tendency to produce the bondage of *karma*. It is in this connection that we have to bear in mind that such forced physical inaction, as is all along associated with selfish longing and attachment in the mind, gives rise to the bondage of *karma*, quite as fully as a life of selfishly directed vigorous activity does. We have therefore to conclude that absolute inaction is impossible in life, and that forced inaction—to whatsoever extent practised—is utterly useless for the purpose of winning the much desired freedom from the bondage of *karma*. Hence the only course that is open to us is to endeavour to make the life of work itself succeed in overcoming and exhausting the *saṃskāra* of *karma*; and it may well be said in favour of this course that it is in no way impossible to follow it. We have already become familiar enough with the *Upanishadic* teaching that work in itself cannot cling to man, and that what makes it cling to him and give rise to the bondage of *karma* is the mental disposition of selfish attachment to the results of work. It is in fact for this reason that the motive has been declared to be more potent than the work in achieving the liberation of the soul from the limitations of material embodiment. Accordingly one has, while living the inevitable life of work, to be wholly free from all selfish attachment to the results flowing from one's own work. Moreover, it is taken for granted here that the work, which one has thus to do unselfishly, cannot be anything other than what one is by nature specially fitted for doing, in as much as it is only such work, as one is well fitted for by nature, that really becomes one's obligatory duty in life. When absolute inaction is impossible and duty cannot be indeterminate, and when the effacement of the *saṃskāra* of *karma* has to be effected entirely by the unattached unselfishness of the mind, then the only means by which the salvation of the soul may be attained is to live strenuously the life of active and unselfish duty. Whether the living of such a life is at all easy is quite a different matter. We have already learnt that it clearly seems to have been Śrī-Kṛishṇa's belief that the living of such a life is perfectly possible. And although Arjuna's doubt in regard to the true bearing of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's teaching must have been well enough removed, as soon as he was given to understand that it laid stress neither on motive alone nor on work alone, but on the unselfish and disinterested performance of all obligatory duties in life,—still,

Śrī-Krishṇa kindly proceeded further in the spirit of the true and loving teacher and unfolded to His earnest disciple the way in which men had learnt in the past and might yet learn in the future the sublimely noble art of living such a pure life of unselfish duty. The true teacher has always and everywhere to be both philosopher and guide to his trustful disciples.

After discharging the philosopher's part of His function as a teacher, Śrī-Krishṇa next addressed Himself naturally to the guide's part of that same function. As a guide it became His duty to place before Arjuna the means whereby real unselfishness may be first implanted in men's lives and then encouraged there to grow well to full stature. We may say that it is evidently for this purpose that He laid down the important proposition that all work, which is other than what is intended for a sacrifice, is apt to subject people to the bondage of *karma*. This, of course, means that no work, which is intended to serve the ends of a sacrifice, can cause the soul to become subject to the bondage of *karma*. Accordingly the best and the most effective means of attaining the state of *naishkarmya* is not to try the impossible task of making our lives absolutely free from all work, but to make the whole of a naturally busy and fruitful life subserve the ends of a great sacrifice by completely dedicating that life with all its endeavours and all their results to God, who is the home of all good and the source of all power. We have seen how in the history of man the religious institution of sacrifice has been one of the most powerful means in enabling him to rise from the life of self-love to the life of unselfish duty. Even he, who begins to worship God through mere self-love, is sure to reap the reward of selfless blessedness in the end, by slowly freeing himself from all taint of selfishness. His blessedness of peace, contentment and joyfulness is the same as is invariably born out of the blessing of self-realisation; and a fruitful course of strenuous life is thus not at all incompatible with the possession of such blessed peace and joy. That a man has no selfish ends to accomplish, need not prevent him from living an unselfish life of work. On the other hand, such a life of work is known to have proved an effective means of salvation in the case of Janaka and other devoted servants of God, who knew well that He is always most effectually

served by serving His creatures with true and unselfish love. Devotion to the service of man being thus equivalent to devotion to God Himself, the life of work is not only a means of salvation to the unselfish sage, but is also an example of worthy guidance to all those who have not yet become good enough sages to be really unselfish. We shall learn in the next chapter what the purpose of divine incarnation is. But here it is well to remember that we have already been told that God Himself, when incarnate upon earth, has to live the life of work, if through His incarnation the intended salvation of mankind is to be really accomplished. If God becomes man to make man become like unto God, and if for this purpose even God has to live the life of work upon the earth, it is impossible to mistake the value of such a life either in itself or as an example which is always fit to be followed by all. There is a difference, however, between the truly selfless sage, who takes work to be worship and looks upon the whole of his naturally active and fruitful life as a suitable means to serve God, and the common man, who also works actively and energetically and lives a life of strenuous labour with the object of gaining his own selfish ends. The former knows well that he cannot be in reality the agent of whatever work he does in life, and cannot also be therefore entitled to be the owner of whatever results accrue from that work. The latter does not possess such a power of philosophic discrimination; and hence he mistakes himself to be the true agent of all that he does in life and also to be the owner of all the fruits that grow out of whatever he does in life. The immediate propeller of all work is *prakṛiti*—material nature; and the ultimate source of all power for the performance of all work is God. Therefore neither physically nor metaphysically is any man entitled to be looked upon as the true agent of work or to be the rightful owner of the fruits of work. Such ownership belongs only to God ultimately and in reality; and we have therefore no other alternative than to dedicate our lives entirely unto God. If we do not do so, we cannot be true to ourselves; and the attainment of *naishkarmya* is impossible except through the active life that is dedicated to the Power Divine. To work and to be free from sin is possible only thus. Therefore work and the appropriate mental disposition are both of value in securing to man what happens to be the supreme good in relation to his divinely ordered mundane existence.

This process of practically achieving the state of *naishkarmya*, as a preparation for the attainment of *mōksha*, consists therefore in realising, with firm faith and with unerring wisdom, that God alone is entitled truly to be the agent of all the work that is done in His universe, and that He alone can hence rightly call anything His own by the title of agency and production. It is through the effective acquisition of such faith and such wisdom that man can conquer his misleading anti-ethical feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*, and thereby manage to rise well above all the stainful promptings of selfishness and sensuality. In fact the central teaching given in the third chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā* is that man should so dedicate his life unto God as to be able thereby to lose completely the ideas of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* in relation to himself, that he must so discipline his mind as to feel quite spontaneously that, because God is in reality the only independent worker in the universe, God Himself is the only owner of all the things that may ever be owned. It is possible that, when a man thus loses his sense of agency in relation to all that he does in life, he may thereby become free not merely from the selfish ideas of authorship and ownership, but from the needful sense of his own moral responsibility as well. If men lived wholly under the settled guidance of the forces of nature and thus sinned, it would be very right not to make them responsible at all for their sins. But all those, who sin, may easily be seen to be doing so, either because they have mistaken their natural vocation, or because they have consciously or otherwise overstepped the bounds of the requisition of nature. Understanding that the responsibility of nature for the life of man is representable in other words as the responsibility of God himself therefor, we cannot fail to see that, when sinning is possible only through the transgression of nature, the sinful man has no means of transferring the blame of his sinfulness elsewhere, but has patiently to bear it all himself. It is through inordinate and unnatural desire that men sin; and the first duty of the aspirant consists therefore in quelling all such desires. He who really seeks salvation must free himself beforehand from the bonds of sin; for the sinful life can never at all be worthy to be in any manner dedicated unto God. Unless a man successfully overcomes his susceptibility to be prompted by all such desires as are not normally natural, even his faith and wisdom in relation to God, as the source

of all power and the home of all good, cannot prevent him from straying into the life of sinfulness and from thus becoming subject to the unceasing bondage of *karma*. That which most strongly and readily leads man to stray into the life of sinfulness is the temptation of the senses; and this temptation has to be conquered by such true discrimination and knowledge as are well supported by a strong and unyielding will. The culture and the invigoration of the enlightened will—which is in fact the most immediate instrument of the power of the soul —are thus the most important things that the aspirant has to aim at and to accomplish; and it is only when he has succeeded well in such an endeavour that he really becomes fit to live that life which may wholly be dedicated unto God. An aspirant of that kind will rarely, if at all, sin; and when he sins, he will not fail to know whom to blame for it and also how to lessen the chances of his ever sinning so again. While sincerely attributing the agency of all that he does to God Himself, to whom alone in reality such agency belongs, he will also see clearly enough that he is himself responsible for whatever sensuality and selfishness and sin may be found in him, and then endeavour earnestly to live such an active and sinless life as is in every respect worthy to be dedicated unto God, and is in consequence well fitted to enable him to obtain the undeniably supreme bliss of the final emancipation of the soul and the consequent attainment of God.

Such is a brief and running summary of the contents of the third chapter of the *Bhagavad-gītā*. To all those among you, who may have felt doubts and difficulties, similar to those that Arjuna felt in connection with the teaching of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, regarding the great value and the inevitable needfulness of the life of unselfish work as a means for the attainment of salvation, this chapter cannot fail to be reassuringly instructive and positively helpful. Let us begin the study of the fourth chapter in our next class.

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CHAPTER IV.

We concluded the study of the third chapter of the *Gītā* in our last class, and to-day we begin our study of the fourth chapter. I have already pointed out to you that the third chapter comes in as a digression intended to meet those doubts and difficulties, which Arjuna, as an earnest lover of truth and goodness, felt in relation to the instruction and advice he had already received from Śrī-Kṛishṇa. We have therefore to understand the fourth chapter to be really a continuation of the second, wherein we found a clear and comprehensive statement of the basic principles of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's philosophy of conduct. It is in fact in reference to that teaching that Śrī-Kṛishṇa appears to have made the following declaration given at the very commencement of the fourth chapter:—

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

इमं विवस्वते योगं प्रोक्तवानहमव्ययम् ।
विवस्वान् मनवे प्राह मनुरिक्ष्वाकवेऽब्रवीत् ॥ १ ॥

एवं परंपराप्राप्तमिमं राजर्षयो विदुः ।
स कालेनेह महता योगो नष्टः परन्तप ॥ २ ॥

स एवायं मया तेऽद्य योगः प्रोक्तः पुरातनः ।
भक्तोऽसि मे सखा चेति रहस्यं ह्येतदुत्तमम् ॥ ३ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID :—

1. This imperishable teaching (of the philosophy of conduct), I gave out to Vivasvat; (then) Vivasvat gave it out to Manu, and Manu gave it out to Ikshvāku.

2. Royal philosophers (of old) came to know this (teaching first), which was in this manner transmitted from generation to generation. (But) that teaching, O foe-foiling Arjuna, has been lost in consequence of the great (lapse of) time.

3. Seeing that you are devoted unto Me in love and are also my friend, that very same ancient teaching has now been proclaimed to you by Me. This is in fact the highest mystery (in religion).

I have already pointed out to you that the word *yōga*, which has many meanings, is frequently enough used in the sense of a reasoned exposition or argumentative teaching of any religious or philosophical doctrine. It is indeed in that sense that the word is used more than once in the three *ślōkas* which I have just read and translated. There are a few points of great interest in connection with what is expressed here in these *ślōkas*. On one of those points Arjuna himself is declared to have questioned Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as we shall learn presently; and this point is as to how Śrī-Kṛishṇa, who was born so late in history as to be a contemporary of Arjuna, could have expounded any mystery or secret doctrine of philosophy and religion to Vivasvat, who is declared in the *Purāṇas* to be among the first of the gods that were created long before ever man came into existence. We need not now be in a hurry to anticipate Śrī-Kṛishṇa's answer to this question of far-reaching religious and philosophical significance, since we have, as a matter of course, to study it very soon. Before I draw your attention to what I consider to be the other points of interest here, please let me mention to you that by Vivasvat we have to understand the sun-god, that Manu, who is conceived to be the original progenitor of mankind, is taken to be the son of Vivasvat, and that Ikshvāku, who is regarded as the earliest human king of the famous solar dynasty of Hindu sovereigns, is conceived to be a son of Manu. The transmission of that teaching, which is referred to here as having been passed on from generation to generation, was thus evidently from father to son; and Ikshvāku must have in his turn passed it on to his son, and he in his turn to his son, and so on. The later kings of the solar race had obviously become more and more indifferent to safeguard well the inestimable treasure of this teaching and to transmit it in good condition to their successors. That is how the need arose for Śrī-Kṛishṇa having to teach it anew to Arjuna at a time so late in history. We thus see that the early recipients of this valuable mystery relating to the philosophy of conduct were all *rājarshis* or

royal philosophers; and Śrī-Krishṇa, who so kindly expounded it again to Arjuna, was Himself a *rājarshi*. The statement made here implies clearly that wise and thoughtful Kshattriya rulers were for long in India the custodians of the highest and the most universally applicable doctrines of Hindu religious philosophy and ethics. In fact there is ample evidence in the *Upanishads* to show that the all-comprehensive universalism of the *Vēdānta* is to a very marked degree due to the liberal catholicity of more than one Kshattriya teacher of ancient days; and some modern students of Hindu thought and civilisation are also of opinion that the wisdom and influence of Kshattriyas have contributed more to true religious and ethical progress in India than the wisdom and influence of Brahmins. It is, however, commonly accepted by even purely Indian students of Indian thought that both *brāhma* and *kshāttra*—as the contributions to thought and life made respectively by Brahmins and Kshattriyas are called—are necessary for the steady, secure and even development of progress. Here we may take it that *kshāttra* represents sovereignty and statesmanship, while *brāhma* represents religious authority and the wisdom and work of the priest as used in behalf of the welfare of society. I am sure many of you know how statesmanship ceases to be statesmanship as soon as it abstains from looking ahead. Similarly religious authority becomes injured at its very core, if it ignores tradition altogether and fails to be wisely conservative. What I mean is that the very nature of the life of the ancient Kshattriya was such as tended to make him a liberal force in society, even as the nature of the life of the ancient Brahmin was calculated to make him a conservative force. Now who is there that does not know that the passage from the religion of the *Vēdas* to that of the *Vēdānta* must have been the result of a great liberal movement in thought as well as in life in India? So long as it was the duty of Kshattriya rulers to look after the general welfare of society, and to see that every member in it was enabled to make the best of himself for the good of himself as well as of society,—or, in other words, so long as they were the guardians of the corporate welfare of society as well as of the welfare of all its individual members,—they would naturally see much sooner than others what changes society required from time to time in its plan of life and in the conception of its ideals. It thus seems to be quite reasonable that Kshattriyas have been the

real authors of more than one important progressive innovation in Hindu life and civilisation; and ancient Indian history—even the little of it that can at all be made out satisfactorily—goes to confirm this conclusion. But this same history confirms another equally natural conclusion also; and that is that, when the new dispensation of the *Vēdānta* became authoritative enough to be superposed upon the old dispensation of the *Vēdas*, the Brahmins as a body neither opposed it nor rejected it, but went on utilising well its new authority for the spreading of purity and enlightenment in society. Even Buddhism has had, as we know, many able and distinguished Brahminical followers and Brahminical supporters. The contrast between the historic attitude of the Jews towards Christianity and that of the Brahmins towards the religion of the *Vēdānta* is fully worthy of consideration in this connection. The position I have been endeavouring to maintain does not mean that no Brahmin in India has at all worked for progress on the lines of liberalism; nor does it mean that all Kshattriyas of culture and power have always worked for progress on liberal lines. What we have really to take note of is the distinction between the contribution of the philosophic statesman and sovereign on the one hand and that of the cultured and pious priest on the other to the advancement of true progress. In the manner in which the priest sanctifies authority, so as to make the people spontaneously amenable to its due exercise, the philosophic sovereign and statesman guides and controls its actual exercise, so as to make it serve the higher ends of civilisation in the constantly varying environment of the steadily advancing social life of mankind. That is evidently what must have taken place in the past history of India also.

Another point of interest here is that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has spoken of His teaching bearing on the philosophy of conduct as the highest mystery, and has declared that He imparted it to Arjuna for the reason that he was His friend and was devoted to Him in love. Did Śrī-Kṛishṇa mean thereby that this highest secret of religious and philosophical wisdom should not be taught to those who were not devoted to Him and were not His friends? Is not this highest secret of wisdom such as everybody ought to know? If the wisdom of this teaching is really calculated to make men live their lives in the

way in which they ought to live, there is surely no reason why such a wisdom should be imparted only to some select persons. The spread of the democratic spirit in modern civilisation has led to a very wide acceptance of the opinion that, whatever is possible and desirable for any one man to know, must be equally possible and desirable for any other to know. Those, who hold that, what is good for one man in the way of religious and moral instruction, must be good for every other man also, are certain to fail to see the meaning of making any truth such a secret mystery as is fit to be imparted only to a few chosen persons. Śrī-Kṛishṇa Himself is not really against such a democratic view. A reference to the concluding part of the last chapter of the *Gītā* will show how anxious Śrī-Kṛishṇa must have been regarding the extended propagation of His religious and philosophical doctrines. It is emphatically declared there that it is highly meritorious to teach those doctrines and equally highly meritorious to learn them, and that both the teacher and the learner become, through their meritorious work, well fitted for the attainment of salvation and fully worthy to be blessed with God's gracious love. From this, it ought to be quite clear that Śrī-Kṛishṇa did not at all want the light of His teaching to be hidden under a bushel, but that He wished it to be openly spread abroad so that it might dispel all religious and moral darkness from everywhere. He, however, saw at the same time serious danger in the indiscriminate scattering of His highly important religious and philosophical doctrines among those that were not really fit to receive them well and to benefit by them. The idea that it is undesirable to throw pearls before swine is certainly not confined to Hindu religion and civilisation; it is known to almost all ancient religions and civilisations of importance; and such a widely current idea cannot surely be altogether unmeaning. If we take into consideration Śri-Kṛishṇa's injunction—also given at the end of the last chapter of the *Gītā*—about who they are, to whom His doctrines should not be taught, we may arrive at the meaning of the limitation imposed upon the universal desirability of spreading the knowledge of those doctrines all over among mankind. This injunction is to the effect that the religious and philosophical doctrines contained in the *Gītā* should not be taught to such persons as are lacking in self-control or in faithful devotion to God, or are not quite anxious to know those doctrines, or are

envious of the greatness of the teacher who is known to have taught them. When we shall study the eighteenth chapter of the *Gītā*, we might try to examine and understand in detail why persons of this description are considered to be ineligible to receive instruction in that philosophy of conduct, which was expounded so freely and so willingly to Arjuna by Śrī-Kṛishṇa. Now it is enough for us if we see that the man without the power of self-control is unfit to be entrusted with the responsibility of self-guidance in the matter of his conduct in life, and that the man, who has no religious faith and is not devoted to God, cannot well utilise the teaching given in the *Gītā*, owing to his inevitable inability to dedicate his life to God. Similarly, if we force any religious teaching on those, who are not anxious to receive it and hence see no good in it, the value of that teaching itself is apt to suffer in popular estimation. This means a diminution of what may be called the efficiency of truth; for, the power of truth to appeal to the heart of man and win his acceptance is as much dependent upon the truthfulness of truth as upon its reputation to be true and fully worthy of acceptance. Lastly, prejudice injures the efficiency of truth even more than want of interest. Uninterestedness injures the spread of truth only negatively; but prejudice and envy against the teacher positively disfigure the fair face of truth. And disfigured truth—what are its chances of acceptance and success? I leave it to you to answer the question for yourselves.

The restriction thus placed on the teachers of religion and philosophy is not therefore intended to shut off any worthy person from the spiritually beneficent and invigorating action of the light of truth. And the argument, that it is only by receiving the teaching of truth that men learn to love and appreciate truth, cannot certainly be lightly discarded. That we have to love in order that we may know, is evidently not much more true, than that we have to know in order that we may love. And yet we have to guard truth against the danger of its being vulgarised and victimised. No thoughtful man can ever afford to deny that there is great danger to society and civilisation in allowing truth to become vulgarised; because the vulgarisation of truth inevitably leads to the decay of the glory of the ideal life, and thus tends to make the actual life much less

worthy than it might otherwise be. It is of course in no way true that truth becomes vulgarised by the mere fact of its being widely propagated; what really valgarises it in the world is the endeavour to spread it among those who, for good and obvious reasons, are not yet worthy to receive it. The position of the religious teacher is therefore one of very serious responsibility. As a teacher he has his obligations in relation to humanity on the one hand, and in relation to truth itself on the other. He cannot in any light-hearted manner withhold the teaching of truth from any person; nor can he freely teach it to those who are certain to cause a depreciation in its deserved dignity or power. We have therefore to see that it is not out of purely personal partiality to Arjuna that Śrī-Kṛishṇa taught him this 'highest mystery' relating to the philosophy of conduct; and there is no reason at all to think that He was unwilling to have it taught to others also. On the other hand we are bound to see that He has enjoined it as a duty on all those, who are sincerely willing to own Him as their Master and to follow Him, that they should spread as freely and as widely as possible the knowledge of all those doctrines of religion and philosophy, which, though taught immediately to Arjuna, were in fact expounded by Him for the benefit of mankind as a whole. When He told Arjuna that He taught him this 'highest mystery', because he was His friend and devotee, He must have meant that as His friend and devotee Arjuna was found to be free from all such disabilities as would take away from him the title to discipleship and to the knowledge of truth. Let us note that, in this context also, Śrī-Kṛishṇa must have spoken to Arjuna with the full consciousness of His own divine nature. Indeed in the following *ślōkas* He may be seen to be declaring Himself to be God incarnate. Hence to be devoted to Śrī-Kṛishṇa meant the same thing as to be devoted to God; and Arjuna as a friend of Śrī-Kṛishṇa could not be envious of His greatness as a teacher. He was thus clearly free from faithlessness in relation to God and from envy in relation to the teacher of truth. In regard to the other two disabling qualifications, namely, want of self-control and want of real earnestness, we know that Arjuna had neither of these disabilities in the composition of his character. How well he possessed the power of self-control comes out from the fact of his having firmly made up his mind to give up the glory of military achievement and political power and to adopt

instead the trying and humiliating life of a mendicant ascetic. It may be that he was not wise in using his strength of will and power of self-control in the manner in which he proposed to use it; but there can be no doubt at all that he had the power. Moreover, none of us can deny the fact that he was in earnest to receive lessons of wisdom and guidance from the hands of Śrī-Kṛishṇa. This earnestness of Arjuna shines out markedly throughout the whole of the *Gītā*. He was accordingly free from all the four disabling qualifications, which we noted as such a little while ago, and so made a most excellent disciple to receive the teaching of even this highest mystery of religion and philosophy. It seems to me that this is what is really meant here. Now let us proceed.

अर्जुन उवाच—

अपरं भवतो जन्म परं जन्म विवस्वतः ।
कथमेतद्विजानीयां त्वमादौ प्रोक्तवानिति ॥ ४ ॥

ARJUNA SAID:—

4. Your birth is recent; the birth of Vivasvat is of old. How am I to understand that You taught (this) in the beginning?

I have already drawn your attention to the point in this question of Arujna. When Śrī-Kṛishṇa said that He Himself taught to Vivasvat that same philosophy of conduct, into which Arjuna was just then being initiated, it was quite natural for Arjuna to feel that the statement was chronologically inconsistent and therefore untenable. Any one of Arjuna's contemporaries might well enough teach anything to Arjuna, but not to one who preceded him by the duration of ages. So far as purely human conditions, as commonly known to us, are concerned, the objection taken by Arjuna to the statement made by Śrī-Kṛishṇa, that He was Himself the teacher of Vivasvat, is a perfectly legitimate one. But we have to remember here that from the very beginning Śrī-Kṛishṇa, while giving out His teaching to Arjuna, was declaring Himself to be a person who was essentially divine in nature. Indeed, it may be seen throughout the whole of the *Bhagavad-gītā* that Śrī-Kṛishṇa thinks and speaks of Himself therein as no other than God. Arjuna was not unaware of

his divine teacher's greatness. Even before the commencement of the great war, Śrī-Kṛishṇa is said to have given ample proof of His greatness to the Pāṇḍavas, so as to lead them often to conclude that He was most probably God Himself in human form; and yet familiarity made them still more frequently forgetful of His wonderful power and greatness. Most men are apt to be too human to perceive God even in the best and the noblest of their fellows; and we shall see as we proceed how Śrī-Kṛishṇa found it necessary to manifest Himself in what is called the Universal Form in the *Gītā*, before He could convince Arjuna that his familiar friend was indeed so very remarkably more than human in essence as to be altogether divine. Thus the question of Arjuna is quite natural; and in what follows Śrī-Kṛishṇa not only answers it, but also goes on developing His teaching in other directions.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परन्तप ॥ ५ ॥

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥ ६ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID:—

5. O foe-foiling Arjuna, many of My births have passed away, and (many) of yours also. I know them all; you do not know them.

6. Though I am unborn and am essentially imperishable in nature, though I am the Lord of all beings, I get into My own *prakṛiti* and am born through My wonderful power.

In these two *ślōkas*, which answer the question raised by Arjuna and at the same time dispose of his difficulty relating to chronological inconsistency, we have a statement of two very important doctrines of the religion of the *Vēdānta*. The first *ślōka* here refers to the doctrine of human re-incarnation, according to which it is quite possible

and generally very necessary for one to be born not merely once but many times. The second *śīōka*, however, deals with the doctrine of divine incarnation. I am sure all of you remember how, in the course of our study of the second chapter of the *Gītā*, we learnt the great distinction between the body and the soul, that is, between *prakṛiti* and *purusha*. We then understood that immateriality, immutability and immortality constitute the essential characteristics of the soul, even as materiality, mutability and mortality constitute the essential characteristics of the body, and that one's own individuality is therefore naturally dependent upon one's immutable soul but not upon the mutable body. In the light of this knowledge, the meaning of any man being born is the same as his immaterial, immutable and immortal soul coming into association with a material, mutable and mortal body, so as to abide in it for a longer or a shorter period of time as the case may be. If by birth we have to understand the beginning of this kind of temporary abidance of the soul in a material body, and if a soul may, under the influence of *karma*, temporarily and for varying periods of time, abide, as we have seen, in a long series of bodies coming one after another, there can be nothing strange or unintelligible in the idea of an embodied soul having had many births. Any immortal soul, that has been in existence from beginningless time and has had to get itself embodied in matter time after time on innumerable occasions, may well be conceived to have lived contemporaneously with any other similarly immortal soul that has had to live the embodied life at various times in the past. Thus even the soul of Arjuna might have been in a body contemporaneously with the birth of Vivasvat; and there need surely be no manner of chronological inconsistency in Śrī-Kṛishṇa having taught the true philosophy of conduct to Vivasvat. Although Arjuna and Śrī-Kṛishṇa may so far appear to us to be similar to each other in respect of the possibility of our conceiving them to have lived at all times in the past, still the position of Śrī-Kṛishṇa is not entirely the same as that of Arjuna. One difference between them is pointed out in the first of the two *ślōkas* we are now trying to understand; and that is that Śrī-Kṛishṇa knew that He had had many births before, while Arjuna had no knowledge at all of any such thing having taken place in relation to himself. It is indeed this ignorance on his part that made him observe inconsistency in the statement of Śrī-Kṛishṇa,

which, on a closer and more careful examination, could turn out to be almost as true as an axiom. In Indian literature, *yōgins* are credited with this power of knowing the nature of all their previous births; and certain modern psychological experiments connected with the hypnotic trance are reported to be able to confirm the possibility of acquiring such knowledge under specially favourable circumstances. The *yōyin*, who has acquired this power of knowing the nature of his many previous births, is called a *jātismara* in Sanskrit; and many of the world's great teachers of religion, such as Gautama Buddha, for instance, are declared to have been such *jātismaras*. I believe there is evidence enough in the *Bible* to show to us that Jesus Christ also must have been a *jātismara*. Between a human *yōgin*, who is a knower of his past births, and God incarnate as man, who is also a knower of His past births, there is a difference which we ought not to miss to observe. Human and all other individual souls become embodied in matter under the influence of bondage-compelling *karma*; and hence in their case material embodiment cannot but impose limitations on their freedom and on their power to know and to grasp the reality. But that Man, who is in essence an incarnation of God Himself, is spiritually too strong to have any such limitations imposed upon Him so easily; and so He may be a *jātismara* from His very birth quite naturally and without any *yōgic* effort on His part. The freely confident manner, in which Śrī-Kṛishṇa is said to have declared that He knew, not only His own previous births, but also those of Arjuna, cannot fail to show to us here that Śrī-Kṛishṇa's knowledge of past births was indeed like that of one who was no other than God incarnate.

The second of the two *ślōkas* we are now studying gives us clearly the distinguishing characteristics of divine incarnation. When God becomes incarnate as man, it is the Supreme Soul that comes to live within a human body; and this Supreme Soul is in more than one respect different, as you know, from the common individual soul. The Supreme Soul is here declared to be *aja* or unborn, the idea being that it has not been produced out of anything which existed before it in time. This idea is often expressed in another manner by saying that the Supreme Soul is that which has itself for its producer; that is, it is self-born. In other words, this

Supreme Soul is the self-existent being. The common individual soul is not so said to be unborn, although it is often said to be *anādi* or beginningless. Imperishability belongs, it is held, as much to the individual soul as to the Suprme Soul. But the latter alone is and can rightly be the Lord of all beings. Moreover, *prakṛiti* or the whole of nature can be owned as His own only by God, who is the Lord of all beings. It is an instrument in the hands of God, who uses it in His work of world-evolution for the purpose of testing and strengthening the spiritual power of all weakened individual souls. Thus God alone, who is Himself both unborn and imperishable, is the Lord of all beings. This means that He is ultimately responsible for the birth as well as the death of all embodied beings. Notwithstanding these essential characteristics, the Supreme Soul is also 'born' sometimes. That is, the Master of *prakṛiti* allows Himself to be embodied in *prakṛiti*. In other words, it is altogether out of His own free choice that God becomes incarnate. In the case of individual souls, however, the position is very different. They too become embodied in matter from time to time. But their embodiments are, as you know, forced on them by *karma*. In respect of the re-incarnation of individual souls, they really have no option at all. It is *karma* that compels them to get into an embodiment, and it is *karma* again that every time determines for them the very nature of their embodiment. Moreover, embodiment necessarily implies limitation in their case very much more than it can do in the case of a divine incarnation. That is why, when God incarnates as man, He is said to enter into His own *prakṛiti* and to be born through His own wonderful power. Thus the complusion of *karma* is not in any way necessary for God to become embodied in matter; and when He becomes so embodied, He is far from being imprisoned in matter or subjected to the bondage of *karma*. This idea of divine incarnation, it is very necessary for us to distinguish from the other important idea of the immanence of God in the universe. It is an essential part of the teaching of the *Upanishads* that the created universe is the cosmos that it is, because God pervades it and has penetrated into it as its Supreme Soul. We shall learn soon enough from the *Gītā* itself that God, as the Ruler of the Universe, is seated near the heart of all beings therein, and from there causes, by means of His wonderful power, their revolution in life, as if they had been mounted to be so revolved

on the mighty machinery of the universe. To say, that God has penetrated into all beings and abides near their heart for the purpose of bringing them within the control of cosmic order and making them work well in harmony with the universe, is not exactly the same thing as saying that He has, out of His own free will, chosen to appear like a particular embodied being in the universe. From this we ought to see at once that the omnipenetrative immanence of God neither overlaps nor contradicts the free and voluntary incarnation of God. Such is the true meaning of the doctrine of divine incarnation as given here in a nutshell.

This doctrine of divine incarnation is not common to all religions. It, however, forms a fundamental part of the *Vēdāntic* religion of the Hindus. Without it, that religion not only loses much of its value and significance, but is also apt to become inconsistent with itself. Christianity also cherishes this doctrine as one of prime consequence. The Semitic mind seems to have, however, failed to grasp the truth underlying this great idea of divine incarnation. Judaism does not seem to have been aware of it in any noticeable manner. According to Islam it almost amounts to blasphemy to think of the Creator incarnating Himself as a creature. The Semitic consciousness of the transcendental distinctness and apartness of God from the created world has been evidently too strong to make it think favourably of even the possibility of divine incarnation. The Jews did not and even now do not look upon the prophets of Israel as incarnations of divine power. They are only God's favoured seers and messengers, who owed their insight and their spiritual power to the blessing of God and to their own fervour of unselfish goodness. In spite of their well recognised greatness and extraordinary wisdom, they are to the Jews no more than human in their essential nature. Similarly Islam has accepted Mahommed to be only a messenger of God. He may be seen to correspond largely to the Jewish prophet. He is not to the Mahommedans what Christ is to the Christians. Indeed it is on the question of the divinity of Christ that the Christians differ so markedly from the Jews as well as from the Mahommedans, although Jesus was a Jew in descent, and although both Christianity and Islam are very largely indebted to Jewish

tradition and Jewish culture for the foundations of their sacredness and authority as revealed religions. It is thus quite clear that Christianity does not owe its doctrine of divine incarnation to any Semitic source; and it certainly does not appear to be easy to maintain that such a doctrine may well have been self-evolved in Palestine. Surely, no one can gainsay that the title to discover truth belongs alike to all nations and to all persons; and there are instances of the same truth having been independently discovered by different persons belonging to different nationalities. Nevertheless, we cannot afford to be blind to the great fact that all forms of truth become revealed unto man only step by step, and that the truth that has already been known is always the forerunner of the truth that has next to be known. I need not tell you how this implies definitely that strange doctrines of religion or philosophy or science cannot be expected to sprout up suddenly out of historically unsuited soil. Any aspect or element of truth discovered in one place at one time may well be transmitted to any other place at any other time. Indeed one of the happiest results of the intercourse of civilisations consists in increasing the volume of known truth in all places by such a process of transference and superposition. What they call eclecticism is a very common feature of the growth of human knowledge; and God Himself seems to have ordained that all parts of mankind—as differentiated both by time and space—should be able to make notable contributions to the growth of the grand and wonderfully illuminated edifice of the revelation of God to man. Eclecticism in religion or philosophy indicates weakness of thought and research, only when the superposed parts of what is accepted as truth do not so harmonise as to make it a congruent whole. Why, I have even heard it said that the eclecticism of a religion like Christianity is in fact one of its many merits. Whatever may be the proper conclusion regarding that point, I have seen the authority of Cardinal Newman quoted to support the fact that Christianity borrowed the doctrine of divine incarnation from the Hindus even as it borrowed the doctrine of the logos from the Greeks. Anyhow, this much is evident that, among the great religions of the world, Hinduism and Christianity alone have accepted and given currency to this highly important and interesting doctrine of divine incarnation.

In Hinduism, however, this doctrine appears to be of purely intrinsic origin and to have been at the same time quite naturally evolved. The *Vēdānta* looks upon the universe as a manifestation of the wonderful power of God, or as an inexplicable embodiment of God through which He becomes at least partially knowable to man. The idea, that the whole universe constitutes the one stupendous whole whose body is nature and God the soul, is held by many Hindus to be one of the central conceptions of the *Vēdānta*. The universe, which forms the body of God, may be as real as God, who forms the soul of it. Or it may be that the universe is not real in exactly the same sense in which God is indeed real. Questions like these are ardently discussed by the various *Vēdāntic* schools known to us in this country, some maintaining that the universe is real even as God is real, others maintaining that the universe is only phenomenally real and therefore not real in quite the same sense in which God is real. It is, however, a well known and widely established fact that no *Vēdāntic* school of Hindu philosophy holds that God is not real. The reality of God is indeed the bed-rock on which the many-mansioned edifice of the *Vēdānta* so securely rests. Although there is difference of opinion among the various *Vēdāntic* schools as to the exact nature of the relation between God and the universe, as to whether we have to look upon the universe as an indescribable manifestation of the wonderful power of God, or as the embodiment of God, or as the dominion of God,—still, all the schools agree in looking upon nature as the true revealer of God, and upon God as the immanent and omnipenetrative controller of the created universe. When the unlimited, absolute and transcendental God becomes immanent in the phenomenal universe so as to be its internal controller, He thereby spontaneously subjects Himself to numerous limitations and conditions, which do not at all appertain to Him intrinsically but appertain only to the phenomenal world. The very name, which the *Vēdānta* gives to God as *Paramātman* or the Supreme Soul of the universe, implies all this. Even as the body limits the soul in the case of any ordinary embodied being, so may nature impose limitations upon God as embodied within and hence as apprehended through nature. The word *Brahman*, which gives expression to another aspect of the *Vēdāntic* conception of God, is derived from a root meaning 'to grow' or 'to increase'; and the word itself signifies unlimited bigness. Moreover,

this word is very frequently associated with the epithet *para*, when it has to denote God ; and the compound word *Para-Brahman* thus formed indicates the supreme transcendence of the unlimitedly Big Being, who can ideed be no other than God Himself. This use of the epithet *para*, meaning 'supreme', is clearly intended to distinguish God from all the other things which may also appear to be infinitely big. Thus the two most important *Vēdāntic* names of God as *Paramātman* and *Para-Brahman* obviously denote two truly different aspects of His essential nature ; the former points distinctly to His immanence in the universe, while the latter draws attention particularly to His supreme transcendence. And yet it is indeed the 'one only' God of the *Vēdānta* who is thus held to be both transcendent and immanent. His all-pervading immanency does not at all limit His transcendency, nor does His transcendency contradict His immanency in any manner. In other words, the transcendent God makes Himself immanent, and yet continues to be transcendent at the same time. The moment He chooses to make Himself immanent in matter, the cosmos comes into existence, and He becomes incarnated in His Universal Form known in Sanskrit as His *Viśvarupa*.

Thus is the idea of incarnation at the very root of the *Vēdāntic* conceptions of God and the universe. How the Sanskrit scriptures of the Hindus endeavour to give expression to these conceptions is in itself a very interesting study. In our *Purusha-sūkta* the Supreme Being is conceived as having sacrificed Himself and as having then evolved the created world out of Himself. In this *Vēdic* hymn the Supreme Being creating the universe goes by the name of Purusha ; and the first four stanzas of the hymn seem to have a clear bearing on what we are now considering. They are—

सहस्रशीर्षा पुरुषः सहस्राक्षः सहस्रपात् ।
स भूमिं विश्वतो वृत्वात्यतिष्ठद्दशाङ्गुलम् ॥ १ ॥
पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यम् ।
उतामृतत्वस्येशानो यदन्नेनातिरोहति ॥ २ ॥
एतावानस्य महिमातो ज्यायाँश्च पूरुषः ।
पादोऽस्य विश्वा भूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥ ३ ॥

त्रिपादूर्ध्व उदैत् पुरुषः पादोऽस्येहाभवत् पुनः ।
ततो विष्वङ् व्यक्रामत् साशनानशने अभि ॥ ४ ॥

Let me now translate these *Vēdic* verses :—

1. The Purusha has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet; He has enveloped the earth all around, and has risen beyond by ten inches.

2. All this—whatsoever has been and whatsoever shall be—is Purusha Himself. Moreover He is the Lord of Immortality, in that He grows beyond limitation by what He feeds upon.

3. His greatness is indeed of this measure; and Purusha Himself is even greater than that. All beings are a quarter of Him, and His three quarters are immortal in heaven.

4. The three-quarters-Purusha who is above—He has gone up; and His one quarter, however, has come to be here below. Having then become all-pervading, He has penetrated into the living and the non-living.

Here the Supreme Being is called Purusha, and is accordingly conceived to be within an embodiment. The word *purusha* itself means, by derivation, he who abides within an embodiment; पुरि शेते इति पुरुषः is its generally accepted orthodox derivation. Hence the word has come to denote the individual soul as well as the Supreme Soul, in as much as both of them may be conceived to be embodied. The embodiment of the individual soul is generally a mortal body of some kind, while the embodiment of the Supreme Soul is invariably the infinite universe itself. And this Purusha, who has thus the universe itself for His body, is declared to have a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, and a thousand feet. This is an effective way of telling us that His power to know, to see, and to move is so great as to be infinite. To say that He envelops the earth all around and rises beyond by ten inches is clearly an endeavour to give expression simultaneously to the ideas of His immanency and transcendency. That His transcendency in relation to the universe implies an essential difference in nature as well as a greater and more comprehensive greatness, is brought out by the statement that He is the Lord of

Immortality and that His growth is not limited by the food wherewith He feeds Himself. He is greater than the universe, and is at the same time essentially and absolutely other than the universe. Such is His transcendency. Further the intensely intimate character of His immanency is pointed out distinctly by the predication of what may be called all-pervadingness and omnipenetrativeness in relation to Him; and this intimacy of His immanence is emphasized by the declaration that one quarter of Him actually constitutes the whole universe here below, even as His transcendence is emphasized by the other declaration that the three quarters of Him, which are up in heaven, do not come down into this phenomenal world at all. Thus, according to the *Purusha-sūkta*, creation itself is an act of divine incarnation; and yet it imposes no limitation of any kind upon the self-incarnating Purusha, whose supremacy and transcendence are thus altogether unaffected by His work of creation and self-evolution.

There is an exceedingly interesting passage in the *Bṛihadāraṇyakōpanishad*, which also tells us in a very striking manner that, in the process of primal creation, the absolute itself becomes the conditioned, and yet does not cease to be the absolute. That passage is as follows:—

पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुद्रिच्यते ।
पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

This passage has been variously interpreted by commentators of various schools; and we may also try to understand it in our own way in this connection. The word *pūrṇa*, which is used here so frequently as to make the whole passage read like a riddle, means ordinarily the same thing as the English word *full*; but the fullness, which is intended to be understood by it here, is evidently the fulness of infinity. Indeed no other fulness can really be so fully full. Therefore we have to translate *pūrṇa* here as 'infinite'; and in English the passage will read thus:—"That is infinite; this is infinite. The infinite rises above and beyond the infinite. On taking the infinite out of the infinite, the infinite itself remains". There can be no doubt whatever that clearly there is reference here

to a nearer visible infinite and a farther invisible infinite. The former is obviously the visible universe, and the latter the invisible God. Or, using the language of the *Purusha-sūkta*, we may say that the former represents that one quarter of Purusha, which has come to be here below, while the latter represents those three quarters of Him, which have gone up and are immortal in heaven. If we understand that this Purusha as a whole is infinite, His one-quarter here below has also to be infinite, much like His three quarters above and beyond. Nevertheless, we cannot easily ignore that the three quarters must exceed the one quarter. In other words, although it is God Himself who becomes incarnated as the world, still it cannot at all cease to be true that God is greater than the world. Accordingly the invisible infinite rises above and beyond the visible infinite. You must all be able to see at once how this means the same thing as saying that God's intimate immanency in the world in no way contradicts His sublime transcendency in relation to the world. The possibility of this non-contradiction is brought out very well in the statement that, when the infinite is taken out of the infinite, the infinite itself remains. Even mathematicians know that what they call infinity is quite apt to play many such parts ; and the philosopher's infinite need not be conceived to be in this matter in any way less able than the mathematician's infinity. When out of Purusha, who as a whole is infinite, His one-quarter, which is also infinite, is taken away to make up the created world, the remaining three-quarters of Him must also be infinite. Thus God does not cease to be God by somehow becoming the world, and even the infinitude of the world can take away nothing from His absolute transcendence and complete infinity. So also, when God becomes man, God does not cease to be God.

Such is the philosophic foundation of the theory of incarnation as known to Hindu scriptures. I have already drawn your attention to the fact that the *avatāra* or the descent of God into the visible universe in the form of a created being is in fact very different from His *antaryāmitva* or internal controllership in relation to all created things. The Creator, who is immanent in the creature, cannot obviously be the same as the Creator, who has voluntarily chosen to become a creature. If it is reasonable to believe that the creating

God has somehow become the created universe, so that this universe itself happens to be a proof of His reality as well as of His power, then surely there can be nothing impossible or unreasonable in God choosing to become and accordingly becoming man. In the matter of God's incarnation, we have to bear in mind another differentiation, which is also generally accepted; and this is the distinction which is made between what is called a *pūrṇāvatāra* and what is only an *aṁśāvatāra*. The former of these expressions literally means 'a full descent' and the latter a 'partial descent'. Where we have the 'full descent' of the Creator into the creature, there the creature is wholly divine. Where, however, the divine descent is partial, there the creature cannot of course be wholly divine. Most of you must have heard of how, what is commonly spoken of as the divine afflatus, is often declared to have moved great men to truly great achievements in great crises in history. The Christian idea of what is called the descent of the Holy Ghost is very much like the Hindu idea of *aṁśāvatāra*. Although it is quite strictly true that, without the power of God, even the end of a blade of grass does not move here upon the earth, still we know well that all things are not alike in this world of ours in respect of their excellence or power or glory. Among men, for instance, some few are 'heroes' as Carlyle would say, while others are more or less common-place creatures: and we may well look upon the 'heroism' of the 'hero' as a special addition of power to his particularly favoured life, which would otherwise have had to be on the same level as the common life of the common man. In one of the later chapters of the *Gītā* we find a *ślōka* (X. 41) which gives us the clue to this question of *aṁśāvatāra*; and that is—

यद्याद्विभूतिमत् सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोंऽशसम्भवम् ॥

According to this *ślōka* all such things, as are possessed of any special excellence or glory or power, are to be understood as having been particularly produced out of a part of the power of God. In other words, we are to see that such things have in them more than that usual fraction of the power of God which is at the root of the very existence and life of every one of the innumerable beings in the universe.

When in this manner we learn that all extraordinary manifestations of power, glory and excellence among created beings are due to a special 'descent' of divine power into them, that is, when the heroism of the hero is seen to be an index of the divinity that is at work within him, our mind gets hold of a means, whereby the invisible God is made visible to it through the apprehension of the way in which He works among His created beings in the universe itself. If the possession of power and excellence in a peculiarly high degree is a proof of the divinity that is inherent within a hero, then the higher the measure and value of that worthy possession in him, the greater must have been the natural in-flow of the life of God into him. Thus the idea of a person, who is a man to all appearance, being fully divine ceases to be startling or inexplicable; for, where the possession of glory and power and excellence is almost transcendentally supreme, there the divinity within must be equally supreme also. Accordingly, the knowledge of the *aṃśāvatāra* is one of the means to know the *pūrṇavātāra;* and the fairly common and often observed possibility of the *aṃśāvatāra* is in itself a proof of the somewhat rarer possibility of what we call a *pūrṇāvatāra.*

I have thus placed before you a brief exposition of the principles underlying the Hindu doctrine of divine incarnation. There are certain other things in relation to this doctrine, which we have still to take into consideration, such as the purpose of divine incarnation, for instance. This and some other connected questions, we shall take up for study in our next class.

xix

In our last class we began the study of the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*, and learnt that the philosophy of conduct, which Śrī-Kṛishṇa taught to Arjuna, was even in those days nothing new, but that it was almost as old as creation itself. This kind of immemorial antiquity attached to the teaching is sure to enhance the high measure of its authoritativeness; and if we further remember, that we have been told that the first teacher of this immemorially ancient philosophy of conduct has been none other than God, we cannot fail to recognise that this divine origin thereof confirms very considerably its time-established authoritativeness and tends to

prove at the same time its universal applicability. The statement made by Śrī-Krishṇa in this connection, that He was Himself the first teacher of this philosophy of conduct, led us, as you know, to an examination of the doctrine of divine incarnation ; and in the course of our examination thereof we were able to learn that, of all the great religions known to history, Christianity and Hinduism alone have accepted it openly, and that in the former it is obviously a borrowed element, while it is a naturally self-evolved and logically consistent doctrine in the latter. We made out further that the very process of creation by God implied, according to the *Vēdānta*, His own incarnation in some manner or other, and that He who could incarnate Himself as the created universe might as well become incarnated in the form of any particular created being. This process of the 'descent' of the Creator into the creature may be, as we saw, either complete or partial ; and God's incarnation in any manner whatsoever cannot impose limitations upon Him, so as to affect injuriously either His unbounded infinity or His supreme transcendency. Now we have to take into consideration the great question of the purpose of divine incarnation ; and that purpose is described thus in the *Gītā* :—

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥ ७ ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥ ८ ॥

7. Whenever the exhaustion of righteousness takes place as also the rising up of unrighteousness, then surely do I create Myself (in the world).

8. For the protection of the good and the destruction of evil-doers, for the firm establishment of righteousness, am I born from age to age.

In this *ślōka* we find first of all a statement of the exact nature of the occasions when God finds it necessary to become incarnate as man. And there is also mentioned here the motive of all such divine

incarnations. God creating Himself—and God being born—these mean, as we have seen already, the same thing as the Creator spontaneously descending into such a material embodiment as is generally seen to belong to a creature. When God comes down to live as a man among men, the spiritual constitution of that divinely incarnated God-man has necessarily to be different from that of the common man, into whom there has been no special or extraordinary descent of the divine principle. From what we have already learnt regarding the nature of divine incarnation, we cannot have failed to make out that the appearance of the God-man in history is not intended to be confined either to a particular place or to a particular time. And here we are distinctly told that God incarnates Himself, whenever the world really stands in need of His incarnation. Accordingly we have necessarily to believe in more than one incarnation of God. The position here stated requires as a matter of course that there must have been many divine incarnations in the past, and that there might very well be many more incarnations in the future. In so far as this philosophic theory of divine incarnations is concerned, it is altogether unreasonable to hold that it permits of only one divine incarnation. If one incarnation is philosophically possible, many more ought to be surely possible also in an exactly similar manner; and hence it is perfectly right that Hinduism believes in many incarnations. But Christianity, which is the other important religion that has adopted the doctrine of divine incarnation, considers that there has been only one incarnation of God in the past, and that there can never at all be any other God-man than Jesus of Nazareth Such at any rate seems to be the orthodox opinion of the Christian Church today in regard to the doctrine of divine incarnation, although Christianity itself, in its modern enlightened condition, shows signs of its having latterly begun to grant freely enough that all lands and all ages have had their witnesses of God and might yet have them more or less abundantly in the future. It appears to my mind that the belief in the narrow dogma of a singular divine incarnation is incapable of any very satisfactory explanation. Such a narrow dogma of singularity has therefore to rest mostly on what is mere unreasoned faith. We have seen that, according to Hinduism, creation itself has to be looked upon as a process of divine incarnation, that in consequence no man is or can be purely man without some amount of the hallowing

admixture of God within him—so to say, and that every man is therefore both God and man, the God within being predominant in some of them, while the man without may be predominant in others. There is divinity in all men ; and even in the best and the most exalted of God-men there is and must of course be a certain amount of the human element. Accordingly, it is the power of the God-element that really exalts and glorifies the life of the God-man, even as it is the pressure of the man-element that keeps the life of the common man at its usual low level and feeble illumination. Such is the Hindu idea regarding the necessary numerousness of divine incarnations.

Although in this manner innumerable God-men must have been born and must have lived well their divine lives in history, still it is clearly evident that their advent from time to time has not anywhere taken place in a haphazard manner. It is only under certain circumstances in history that we notice men of extraordinary power and excellence coming to play their part here on earth ; and it is desirable to try and make out as far as possible the nature of the occasions when they come. I am sure you can all see at once that the occasion for a divine incarnation is generally determined by the purpose which it has to accomplish. Indeed the advent of the God-man never takes place unless some great purpose is really to be served thereby ; God need not 'descend' to be a man among men merely to do that very work which man himself as man can do. And creation itself having to be conceived in the light of the *Vēdānta* as a process of divine incarnation, the beneficent object of this process of God's universal incarnation has ordinarily been understood to be to test and to improve the spiritual strength of individual souls by placing them in this great and wonderful material world, which, while affording unto them ample scope for the manifestation of the power of love and of goodness, is also full of severe temptations and trials and difficulties, which those souls have to get over by means of honest and earnest striving. In the manner in which we lead our boys into water so that they may therein learn to swim and thus become able to guard themselves against the danger of getting drowned, God has introduced souls into the world of matter to enable them by due training and exercise therein to overcome its innumerable temptations of unspiritual worldliness. It is obvious that some such spiritual end

is really in view, because history is seen to encourage goodness and strength in general, while it suppresses badness by force and drives weakness invariably to the wall. The relation, which, as we have seen, exists between the incarnation of God as the universe and His incarnation as a God-man, makes it evidently necessary for the aim of the latter also to be the same in character as the aim of the former. Accordingly, we have it distinctly declared to us here that the protection of the good and the destruction of evil-doers constitute the purpose for which God 'descends' upon the earth from time to time as a God-man. Although this great work of protecting the good and punishing the wicked has always to be very carefully carried out in every well regulated community of human beings, still there arise occasions in history, when the performance of such work happens to be hard and urgent and more than usually needed. Since it is a well-known fact of history that the greatness of a civilisation depends mainly on the strength and effectiveness of the moral power which sustains it, the occasion for the beneficent interference of the God-man in the historic work of the world arises very naturally when the moral power of a society or of its civilisation becomes enfeebled to an alarmingly dangerous extent. The timely advent of the great God-man on such an occasion is either intended to help the morally enfeebled civilisation to regain its lost power or to make it give way to a purer and more virile civilisation. This is in fact one of the most evident lessons of history. And another lesson which is also equally evident is that wealth and industry and war-power, although generally very necessary for the keeping up of physical vigour and social order in all organised civilisations, cannot very well enable any civilisation to live on either enduringly or effectively to good purpose, if the moral power of justice and character—of love and of sacrifice—is not sufficiently available for quickening and ennobling it adequately from within. It cannot be hard to see that wealth and industry and war-power are themselves in this way so largely dependent everywhere upon character and justice as almost to dwindle away into mere nothing in their absence. In the absence of justice and character, they very often become, as you know, festering sores or centres of rottenness, on the features, if not within the very heart, of even the mightiest of civilisations. Surely nothing saves or sustains a civilisation so well as true righteousness. To

say that it is righteousness alone which exalts a nation is surely nothing more than a strictly accurate and wholly unvarnished statement of a very extensively established fact of history. The common toilers in life, who form everywhere the bulk of all the living labourers in history, may not themselves be aware of this great fact. Why, they are only too often unaware of it. That is why it has become such a strong and unconscious tendency of the common man to be so very selfish. When, through the unchecked assertion of the common man's tendency to be selfish, unrighteousness grows with wild vigour and at the same time righteousness withers away too much, then arises the greatest of all possible dangers to society and civilisation,—and also as a matter of course to the attainment by man of the soul's salvation. Hence it is on such highly critical occasions that the God-man comes down to the world of history to avert such an undeniably fatal danger by duly bestowing protection on the good and by dealing out at the same time deserved destruction to the wicked.

Let us now try to understand what is further implied in these two *ślōkas*. We have already made out that we are given to understand here that, in the world's history, there have been many God-men born appropriately at various times and in various places, and that many more of them are certain to be similarly born hereafter, whenever indeed such occasions arise in history as really require their beneficent work and influence. We have further seen that the object of the well-timed advent of the God-man is primarily to strengthen the moral vitality of human life, and thereby to sustain the purity and to stimulate the progress of human civilisation in all those critical periods in history when the reforming and restorative work of all such men, as have no specially divine power or endowment within them, turns out to be inadequate to counteract effectively the aggressive assertion of man's low animalism and selfishness over his higher humanity and spiritual purity and freedom. The endowed God-man comes down to live and labour among mankind in all the great moral crises in history, and then by his telling work and influence prevents the degradation of man by encouraging in him the uplifting of the spirit. Although the crisis which calls urgently for a God-man is determined by the decay of righteousness and the simultaneous growth of unrighteousness, still we have no means of

making out the nature of that exact moral balance between decaying righteousness and growing unrighteousness, which definitely fixes the exact hour of the God-man's very urgently needed advent. You may have heard students of history and of the progress of civilisation discuss about what they commonly speak of as the problem of the hour and the man. The great man, or the hero—or the God-man, as we should now say—why does he come at the particular hour when he comes, but neither a little before nor a little after? This question may be answered in two ways. There are those who think that the hero is called into existence by the historic forces of his environment, even as the very nature and manner of the internal moral life of the average individual are everywhere ordinarily determined by the character of the civilisation wherein he is born and brought up. There are, however, others who do not fully accept this view to be right; and according to these, it is surely not the hour that always makes the hero, but it is the hero that often makes the hour. Some of you may probably know and remember how Carlyle, referring to this very question in his *Hero-worship*, has called attention to the fact that many an hour in history has cried aloud and yet in vain for the hero to come. If it be the hour that makes the hero, it would be really unintelligible why he does not come whenever he appears to be so very much wanted in history by the current conditions of human life; and it would be equally unintelligible why, when he comes, he does not come as one out of a large company of heroes like himself, but comes as if almost uniquely all alone and only in picked places. The position here maintained is that the hour happens only to need the hero, but does not and cannot make the hero. The God-man's endowment of power is not held to be derived from nature, but is considered to be sent down as a divine gift from above. That explains why there is always such a personal magnetism about the hero, and why, almost as soon as he wishes to lead, he succeeds in commanding a following. There are leaders whom merely their followers have managed to make into heroes. But there are also leaders, who have, as a natural gift in them, the power to lead, and are for that reason freely and spontaneously followed by a large body of honest and intelligent and faithful followers. True heroes, who are true God-men, are everywhere seen

to be real and gifted leaders of this latter kind; and that is why they leave their mark upon the hour of their work in history, so that for long after them the influence of their life and thought tends to make the path of progress both smooth and clear. In these days, when so many of us wish to be leaders in our country in so many ways, and so few of us succeed at all in commanding anything like a worthy following, it is good for us to learn that our failure to achieve for ourselves the very highly coveted position of leadership is much more largely due to want of power and want of fitness in ourselves than to any outside cause. The true God-man, as a moulder of history, is always well endowed with the power of leadership; and he neither comes too soon nor too late. It is altogether impossible for him to be out of time. It, however, may appear to us common men at times that he does not come quite as soon as he is wanted. That is evidently because it is so very hard for so many of us to get rid of what may be called our personal parallax so as always to look at things with the completely comprehensive vision of time and of history. We have, however, Śrī-Kṛishṇa's assurance here that, whenever in fact such an occasion arises in history as really needs the help and guidance of the gifted God-man, then he is invariably born to give effectively to the world the required help and guidance. If he comes too soon, man's capacity for self-help is apt to be seriously injured thereby; and if he comes too late, the car of civilisation becomes easily liable to be forced to move backwards. Moreover, when he comes, he has to protect as well as to destroy, in as much as the very destruction that he deals out is calculated to promote the fulfilment of the beneficent aim of his divine advent. I have already explained to you the position of Śrī-Kṛishṇa in relation to the doctrine of the non-resistance of evil; and you know that He certainly did not consider this doctrine to be one of universal applicability. Even Jesus, who came not to destroy but to fulfil, and is further supposed by some few among his followers to have taught this doctrine of non-resistance unreservedly,—even He is known to have declared that He had nevertheless brought a sword with Him. After all, is there no meaning at all in poetry placing a shining sword in the guiltless hand of the Goddess of Justice? Ordinarily, the protection of the good is not possible without the destruction of evil-doers; that is, to save righteousness from

becoming exhausted in society, unrighteousness has certainly to be suppressed by force. A rule of life, given for a peaceful and perfected *sāttvika* saint to adopt, cannot, with any real propriety or advantage, be at all utilised in controlling the mixed moral life of a complex society, so as to guide it safely towards the assured attainment of true progress and freedom.

Such are some of the important implications in these two *ślōkas*, which tell us of the proper occasion as well as of the true aim of divine incarnations. In the next *ślōka* we have a statement of the great importance of the knowledge of the nature of divine incarnation, and also of the very great usefulness of such a knowledge as a means for the attainment of salvation and spiritual emancipation.

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥ ९ ॥

9. He, who truly knows thus My divine birth and work,—(he) does not happen to be born again after relinquishing the body, (but) comes to me, O Arjuna.

Please note how a true knowledge of the nature of divine incarnation as well as of the work of the God-man in history is here declared to be in itself fully capable of relieving the person, who has acquired such knowledge, from the troublesome necessity of having to be born again, such knowledge having also the power to enable him to obtain after death the salvation of God-attainment. It is not intended to point out here that the mere intellectual realisation of the *Vēdāntic* theory of divine incarnation is capable of producing a result of this kind. We have, on the other hand, to understand the statement in this *ślōka* to mean that a true knowledge of the theory of divine incarnation, as explained here by Śrī-Krishṇa, is well calculated to teach us certain valuable lessons in regard to our own conduct in life. It is an approved principle of ethics among many orthodox Hindus that the philosophically accepted character of the life of God determines in its turn the character of the ideal life of man ; or, as it is commonly expressed, *bhagavad-dharma* is determinative of *bhāgavata-dharma*. We have already tried to understand how God, in becoming man, freely and

of His own choice imposes limitations upon Himself. In undergoing the process of incarnation as man, the omnipotent God becomes for most practical purposes a man of more or less limited power, the unchangeable and everlasting God becomes a mortal man characterised by a limited duration of life. Who can indeed deny that in this there is involved a great sacrifice of freedom and power on the part of God? That the loss of freedom here is due to spontaneous and self-imposed restrictions, or that the loss of power is due to similarly imposed and voluntarily accepted limitations, does not in the least alter the situation. Surely it makes the sacrifice all the more meaningful. Now, for what purpose does God make such a sacrifice? We have just been told that it is for the purpose of establishing righteousness by bestowing protection on the good and by dealing out destruction to wicked evil-doers. Such an establishment of righteousness is not, however, held to be an end in itself; and so it cannot be the ultimate motive of the great God-man's generous 'descent' upon the earth. It is righteousness alone which really feeds and fully fosters the spiritual power of any person, even as it is righteousness alone which exalts a nation. Consequently the God-man's work of establishing righteousness upon earth is nothing less than helping men with the means, whereby they may release their captive souls from the bondage of the flesh, so as to enable them to obtain assuredly the divine bliss of spiritual salvation. Hence we have to understand that it is the emancipation of enslaved souls—so as to fit them for the attainment of the final salvation of God-attainment—which forms in reality the ultimate object of the God-man's generous descent upon the earth. In other words, the motive-power of the God-man is love. Accordingly, love and sacrifice are seen to be the two things which most prominently characterise the willing incarnation of God as man.

Having 'descended' down to the earth, how does the God-man live his life among men? The God-man is in reality *pūrṇakāma* like God Himself, and has no selfish object to aim at or to strive for in his human life. He is one, whose desires are all already fulfilled; because, being what he is, he can in fact have no unfufilled desires. The motive of his life of incarnation is therefore altogether altruistic, and can indeed be nothing other than the salvation of embodied souls. Nevertheless, he too has to live like all other men the normal

human life—the life of work and accomplishment, of labour and achievement. Otherwise the very purpose of his conjointly divine and human life is apt to be missed entirely. If, for the reason that he has no selfish objects to win, he declines to live the life of work, others will naturally begin to imitate his example of inaction, and will thereby lose hold of work itself as a valuable means for the attainment of the salvation of *mōksha*. The true object of work is not to serve selfish ends, but to create as well as to sustain the naturally twice-blessed quality of unselfishness. I believe I have already drawn your attention to the fact that most men guide their lives more or less by the process of imitation; and since the God-man happens to be an extraordinarily endowed personage, his lead is of course certain to be followed by many, whose intellectual inertia is as great as their will-power is weak. Like the motive of the God-man's life, its manner also is determined by his dominant resolve to help and to do good to others. We have seen that God, in becoming man, in no way ceases to be God. Similarly the God-man, by living the normal life of man as man, does in no way become less than a God-man. When God becomes incarnated as man, what really happens is, as you know, not that God is brought down to the level of man, but that man is lifted up to the level of God. Such an elevation of man is made possible by the God-man Himself living that normal human life, which all such men have to live as hold spiritual progress and freedom to be the aim of life. If we grasp well the meaning of divine incarnation as explained here, and thus come to understand that all great men, who have appeared in well-known crises in history in all the various parts of the world, have really been God-men more or less, and that their work in history has uniformly tended to elevate man more and more to the lofty level of the divine, we are sure to admire and to appreciate most warmly the greatness of all historic heroes, and to feel at the same time that man is not after all a miserably weak and low and fallen being, but that he has in him the latent capacity to rise up to the plane of the throne of God Himself. Speaking of poets, who are among the best of constructive philosophers known to history and are the most successful architects of some of the noblest of human ideals, Goethe is known to have declared that they make for man his gods, bring them down to him, and then raise him up to them. Most

God-men do not write poetry, but all of them live poetry. Therefore they all bring down our God unto us and also lift us up unto Him. This they do by setting for us the example of the ideal life that we ought to live. For this purpose the God-man has evidently to live the life of the ordinarily typical man who is in no way unnatural or abnormal; and we in our turn have to follow the God-man's ideal example of purity and unselfishness. Otherwise, our own elevation becomes impossible, and the advent of the God-man turns out to be unfruitful. Our examination of the nature of divine incarnation and of the life of the incarnated God-man has so far shown to us that love, sacrifice, and work without any selfish attachment to results are the most notable characteristics of the God-man's 'descent' into the world of men and of his career therein as a man among men. We have accordingly to lay to heart that, if we desire spiritual freedom and seek the salvation of the soul, we have to make our lives resemble the life of the God-man by an equally notable manifestation of love and sacrifice and an equally strenuous performance of unselfish work. The sanctification of work into duty first, and then into worship, can very well take place in all spheres of human life, when men understand the meaning of the divinely endowed life of the God-man, and through that knowledge succeed in their endeavour to follow that life so well as to make its motive and manner become, as far as possible, the motive and manner of their own lives.

Please note that the birth of Śrī-Kṛishṇa and His work in life are both appropriately characterised here as being divine. Indeed they cannot have been other than divine, seeing that there are reasons to believe that Śrī-Kṛishṇa was a highly gifted God-man. We have been already informed that His birth was not due to the compulsion of any inherited *karma*, and that His life could not create for Him any thing like the bondage of *karma*. We may easily gather from this that it is within the power of God—and possibly also of certain individual souls—to become embodied in matter even otherwise than through the compulsion of *karma*. But it is of much greater importance for us to know how the human life of the God-man does not in any way subject him to the bondage of *karma*. In this respect the life of the gifted God-man is fully demonstrative of the truth of the teaching given in the *Iśāvāsyōpanishad* which says—

न कर्म लिप्यते नरे—work in itself does not cling to man. Moreover, what that thing really is, which, on the other hand, makes his work cling to man so as to subject him to the bondage of *karma*, is also capable of being made out definitely from the study and contemplation of the free and unenslaved life of the God-man. That is, while He too has to live, and does accordingly live, the life of well-conducted and well-aimed work, what really distinguishes Him from others, who may also live such a life of hard work in full subjection to the enthralling influence of *karma*, is the abolutely unmixed altruism of His divinely endowed life. Hence it must of course be this unique feature of His life, which is really responsible for His work not clinging unto Him, that is, for His active life of steady labour and achievement not producing for Him the bondage of *karma*. Our very theory of divine incarnation has made it plain to us how any thing like egoism is utterly incompatible with the life of the God-man. It will obviously take away much from the graciousness of God's love to declare that He is not selfish, simply because He has no need at all to be selfish. Although it is quite true that He has no need at all to be selfish, being the omnipotent God that He is, still our study of the nature and purpose of divine incarnation cannot but convince us that gracious love constitutes the very essence of His existence. Such being the case, the unmixed altruism of the life of the God-man receives a perfectly rational explanation ; and no one has therefore any right to say that such an absolutely altruistic life is either unnatural or impossible. That it is this kind of unmixed altruism, which is responsible for the life of the God-man not becoming subject to the influence of *karma*, is in complete correspondence with the *Upanishadic* teaching regarding how a man may free himself from the thraldom of *karma*. We have it declared in more than one *Upanishad* that, when the heart becomes free from all the desires that are usually lodged therein, the mortal man becomes immortal and attains the *Brahman* even here below in this world. Indeed from what we have already studied in the *Gītā*, we know how important it is for every aspirant after salvation to quell the *kāma* in the heart. In fact we have been told that, in so far as both self-realisation and God-realisation are concerned, there is no greater enemy for man than wishful *kāma*. Love and labour, sacrifice and service, and absolute freedom from all selfish wishfulness in the heart are exactly the things, which impress

themselves strongly upon our minds as the most notable characteristics of the extraordinarily endowed life of the God-man. And if our knowledge of these characteristics of the life of the God-man happens to be so real and effective, as to powerfully impel us to imitate such a life, that is, if these characteristics become, as it were, the very breath of our lives, then surely unrighteousness can never come to be associated with us either in relation to our thoughts or in relation to our deeds; and we shall then, as a matter of course, step easily into the state of *naishkarmya*, and thereby accomplish the final release of our souls from the sorry and sin-sullied captivity of *karma*. The soul that is thus freed from the thraldom of *karma* is no longer prone to be imprisoned in matter; and when it in this way acquires freedom from the limitations of material embodiment, it becomes itself so that there comes to it the highly luminous experience of self-realisation almost immediately. When the nature of the relation between God and soul, as acceptable to all the schools of the *Vēdānta*, is well borne in mind, we cannot fail to see how very natural and reasonable it is for the liberated soul to go to God and attain Him. That self-realisation naturally and necessarily leads to God-realisation is a position which is distinctly maintained in the *Gītā*; and no philosophy, which is not aggressively atheistic, can or will contend seriously against such a reasonable position. Hence it must be in this way that the knowledge of the nature of divine incarnation and of the work of the God-man in history is calculated to release men from the recurring necessity of undergoing reincarnation. It is indeed only thus that most men have to win their salvation and go to God as their final refuge.

The way, in which the true knowledge of the nature of the God-man and of his work here upon the earth makes it possible for men to achieve their salvation and become blessed with God-attainment is brought out clearly in the next *ślōka*. In fact, it enables us to see that the efficacy of such knowledge, as an unfailing means of salvation, is determined entirely by its being honestly and earnestly put to use as a sure practical guide of our own conduct in life.

वीतरागभयक्रोधा मन्मया मामुपाश्रिताः ।
बहवो ज्ञानतपसा पूता मद्भावमागताः ॥ १० ॥

10. Many, who have been purified by the austerity of thought and have got rid of desire and fear and anger, and have become quite full of Me and are depending upon Me,—(many such) have come to (attain) My condition.

What I have translated here as 'the austerity of thought' is the expression *jñāna-tapas*. The word *tapas* is derived from a root which means 'to be hot'; and it has come to denote the practice of religious austerities with a view to self-purification through the acquisition of the power of self-control. All the processes connected with the practice of *tapas* are such as tend to curb by force one or more of man's natural unethical propensities. To compel the appetites to remain unfed, or to force the body and the mind to undergo pain of various kinds, is generally looked upon as constituting *tapas*. Even this is certainly capable of making people insensible to pain and free from too much relish for pleasure. Among the tribulations, to which all those who practise *tapas* subject themselves, the tribulation of thought and meditation is surely not the least trying. I have, I believe, spoken to you more than once of the common propensity of man to be unwilling to think, and called it by the significant name of intellectual inertia. It must be surely a matter of common experience that we are all naturally apt to 'feel hot' within, whenever any of our common propensities are forcibly counteracted either from within or from without. And the counteraction of mental inertia often make us markedly 'hot' within. The austerity, which is denoted by *jñana-tapas* here, means in fact even more than the overcoming of the common propensity to be unwilling to think. For, when true thought is exercised strictly and well in relation to the great problem of conduct, as viewed from the stand-point of the reality and the immortality of the soul, it is sure to lead us logically to the conclusion that desire, fear and anger are antagonistic to the attainment of the salvation of the soul, and that devotion to God and dependence upon God are highly helpful to the attainment of that same salvation. If thought establishes that the salvation of the soul is the true *summum bonum* of life, and if things like desire, fear and anger are truly not conducive to the attainment of that *summum bonum*, while devotion to God and dependence upon God are conducive to its attainment, it follows as a

matter of course that the aspirant after salvation should give up desire and fear and anger altogether, and should at the same time become absorbingly devoted to God and entirely dependent upon Him in love and faith. These are the positive and the negative requisitions, which such true thought commands in relation to life. And now, is the giving up of desire and fear and anger in accordance with man's natural propensities? Is man naturally and of himself prone to be whole-heartedly devoted to God and to be always and entirely dependent upon God? It does not require much knowledge of human nature and human experience to answer these questions; and the truest answer to both of them is, as almost all of you will readily grant, in the negative. Therefore there is certainly *tapas* in overcoming desire and fear and anger; and there is *tapas* as well in the practice of self-surrender and devotion to God. Accordingly, what I have spoken of as the austerity of thought cannot mean merely the overcoming of our very common and widely natural intellectual inertia; it also means the hard practical enforcement of those lessons of life, which are logically derived from the right and active exercise of thought. Those that know the nature of divine incarnation, and are able to make out the meaning of the life of the God-man well, cannot therefore be mere thinkers of thoughts; they have also to be the livers of the heroic and saintly life. Thought dissociated from life is apt to prove futile, and life dissociated from thought is certain to become notably erroneous. Hence the austerity of thought implies, according to this *ślōka*, the efficient exercise of thought as well as the firm maintenance of purity and unselfishness in association with a noble purposefulness in practical life.

If, as we may, we broadly understand by *tapas* the discipline of self-control through self-restraint, it cannot be hard to make out how such a discipline is well calculated to work out the purification of human life. It is not quite right to suppose that *tapas* means merely the assuming of various difficult physical postures, and sitting for long in sun and in rain, irrespective of the pleasure or the pain that may be caused to one thereby. Even these things are, no doubt, well capable of dullening the edge of man's sensitiveness to pain and pleasure; indeed they may also help him in avoiding desire, which is after all nothing other than the tendency to seek more and more of

pleasure and less and less of pain. But this kind of largely physical *tapas* does not and cannot strengthen the inner will-power of the aspirant to any very marked extent. Nevertheless, it has been practised for long in many places by many persons as an aid to religious discipline. Fasting and vigils, as religious exercises, come under this category. Such physical *tapas* forms, as you know, an element in the practice of *yōga* also. The discipline of life generally connected with many such religions as are technically known to be 'legal'—religions like Judaism and ritualistic Brahmanism for instance— is full of numerous restrictions which are imposed upon the conduct of the individual with all the authority that belongs to revealed religions. Restrictions thus imposed in relation to almost every kind of human activity, such as eating, drinking, sleeping, dressing, and so on, often appear to us to be vexatious and meaningless. And yet they are of value in equipping us with the power of self-restraint, without which it is absolutely impossible for any man to live a morally pure life. The inner purity of the soul cannot at all be well maintained without the exercise of abundant self-restraint on the part of the individual; and the practice of steady and willing obedience in relation to externally imposed restraints gives rise in time to the power of self-restraint and helps it on gradually to become more and more potent and telling. Domestic discipline, school discipline, church discipline, as well as state discipline are all aware of this great fact of human nature that the power of self-restraint has invariably to be acquired through continued submission to external restraint. There seem to be, as I have after some thought learnt to believe, three stages in the discipline needed to strengthen, to the fully required extent, man's inner power of self-control. The first of these three stages is that one in which the individual is controlled by the commands of those persons who are in a position to effectively exercise authority over him. Here it is the fear of direct and immediate punishment which compels obedience. In the next higher stage, the control of the individual is carried out not by means of direct personal commands, but by means of certain authoritatively imposed and more or less intelligently accepted laws. There is, however, a still higher stage, in which a man may very well become a law unto himself. This last stage is that in which the fully well-disciplined man has within himself an

adequately strong will-power to overcome all the temptations of life both easily and effectively. Such a man's self-mastery is built upon the sacredness of an unerring conscience, and his righteousness is therefore entirely determined by himself. This sort of passage from external restraint to self-restraint, and from self-restraint to spontaneous self-control, is very common and natural; and we may see it in operation not only in the life of individuals but also in the life of organised human societies. I am sure you know that despotism also has its place in the development of human civilisation. In a society, wherein the individuals have not as yet generally acquired enough of the power of self-restraint but have to be controlled largely by external restraint, and wherein they have not as yet learnt to distinguish their own personal interests from the larger interests of society as a whole, and are moreover incapable of acting together harmoniously so as to serve well the larger interests of the corporate life of the community even at the sacrifice, if necessary, of the smaller and more limited interests of particular individuals,—in such a society democracy has no place and despotism alone is bound to be of service. Similarly it may freely and fearlessly be asserted that even that social ideal which they call anarchism can do no harm of any kind to a society, the members of which have all become perfected saints through self-discipline and self-control. On the other hand, it may even be urged that anything other than anarchism, that is, that ideal organisation of society which is so extremely individualistic as to discard all government as unwanted, is certain to act injuriously on a society of such saints, who obviously stand in no need at all of any control by any government. Thus an examination of the progress of the individual as well as of society, in the direction of first deserving, and then of obtaining, more and more freedom, tells us distinctly that the purifying power of *tapas* is always very real and of great value.

It is Śrī-Kṛishṇa's opinion, as given in this *ślōka*, that he, who is purified by the austerity of thought, attains what is here in Sanskrit called *madbhāva*. This word means 'my state' or 'my condition'. Understanding Śrī-Kṛishṇa to be an incarnation of God, we ought to see at once that the purification produced by the austerity of thought is here declared to be fully capable of making the earnest

aspirant attain the condition of God. But what is it for one to attain the condition of God? In regard to this there is a difference of opinion among the Indian followers of the *Vēdānta*. According to some, the attainment of the God-condition means nothing more than becoming like unto God, while according to others it means nothing less than becoming one with God Himself. The latter position is maintained by the monistic *Vēdāntins* whom we call by the name of *Advaitins;* and such *Vēdāntins*, as are not *Advaitins*, do not believe in the possibility of an individual soul becoming essentially identified with God. All Hindus agree in maintaining that the attainment of the God-condition can take place only in the state of *mōksha*, wherein the soul becomes finally liberated from the bondage of *karma* and thereby wins back its own natural and unlimited freedom. The question of controversy, therefore, is whether in that free state the liberated soul is characterised by *sāmya* or *aikya* in relation to God, that is, whether it is characterised by 'similarity' unto God or by 'oneness' with God. Without dilating upon this controversy and without taking up any side therein, we may very safely arrive at the conclusion that *jñāna-tapas*, or the austerity of thought, if well carried out, so purifies a man and frees him from sin and selfishness as to make him fully worthy to attain the salvation of *mōksha*, after attaining which he either becomes God Himself or certainly becomes God-like in nature. To know well the nature of the life and work of the God-man cannot obviously be any thing less than a *jñāna-tapas* of this kind; and that is why such austerity of thought is declared to be fully capable of relieving men from the necessity of undergoing re-incarnation under the coercion of *karma*. You know how we have been told that that kind of knowledge takes men to God so as to make them attain at once the supremely covetable God-condition as their final salvation. The austerity of thought, which thus enables a man to know the truth and leads him thereafter to live up to it ever unfalteringly, is not of course practised without difficulty; there are in fact so few among us who are really fit for so hard an effort. Although it is unquestionable that this kind of austerity of thought is well suited to serve as an efficient means for the attainment of salvation, still it ought not to be treated as the only means for attaining such an end. For, if it were indeed so, salvation itself would become altogether unattainable to many.

Moreover, we have been already told that there are other means than the austerity of thought, by which also it is possible for men to free themselves from the bondage of *karma* and thus become fit for the attainment of what we have now been speaking of as God-condition. Devotion to God and dependence upon God, are, as we have already seen, well able to kill our selfish feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*, so as to make it quite easy and natural for us to get out of the bondage of *karma*. Devotion to duty has also been shown to be equally capable of producing the same result. Thus any one of these means may be adopted for the attainment of final emancipation and its attendant God-condition. He, who is fit for the austerity of thought, may not be equally fit for the ecstasy of divine devotion. Similarly he, who is fit for either of these, may not be fit alike for the all-absorbing self-dedication to duty as duty. The mental constitution and the moral temperament of individuals determine their fitness for the appropriate adoption of one or other of these means for the attainment of salvation; and so long as each of these means is capable of taking us to the same goal, it ought to make no difference which of them we adopt, provided that what we adopt is in true accordance with our own natural and constitutional fitness. That is, all these roads lead to God equally well; and we are in fact told so here in the next *ślōka*.

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्मानुवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ ११ ॥

11. Whoever in whatsoever manner resort unto Me as (their) refuge, them do I receive in that very same manner. In all manner of ways, men follow My path, O Arjuna.

Here the expression *mama vartma*, which has been translated as 'my path', is capable of being understood in two ways according to the force we give to the genitive inflexion in the word *mama* meaning 'my'; 'my path' may therefore mean either the path planned out and prepared by me, or the path which leads to me. It is the latter of these two meanings which is evidently intended here. The former meaning, however, is not in any way incompatible with

truth; and it is also well enough applicable in the context here. As a matter of fact, we cannot fully make out the correct significance of this important *ślōka*, unless we take both these meanings into our careful consideration. If we accept freely that all roads of unselfish righteousness lead to God, how can we thereafter, with any semblance of logic, decline to accept that every one of those roads has the authoritative sanction of His approval? And does not this sanction of His approval mean further that every one of those roads has, in reality, been planned out and prepared by Him? I am sure you know how the idea of evolution has been applied systematically to the study of religion and ethics in these modern days in Europe. Neither the idea of evolution nor its application to the problems of religion and ethics is, however, new to the history of philosophic thought in India. Still I am not quite sure, if it has been as widely enough recognised among us, as among some others, that this conception of evolution has really a wonderfully hallowing influence on thought, and makes every stage of advance in every line of progress in relation to all the institutions of civilisation correspond to the several steps that lead up to the top of the holy altar of truth, whence alone may the unspeakable effulgence of the glory of God become so visible to man's mortal eyes as to cause him at once to be divinely transfigured. If we do not forget that there are numerous religions known to the science of comparative religion, and that every one of these many religions shows clear signs of its having passed through comparatively earlier stages of growth and development, we are sure to grasp comprehensively how very true it is that there are many variedly arranged flights of steps which lead up from various positions to the top of the holy altar of truth. To realise this is the same thing as to come to know that there are many paths that lead to God, all of which are indeed wanted and are hence included in God's omniscient plan of the government of the universe. The many paths leading to God are in this manner not only representative of the various stages of progress in the history of various religions, but are also illustrative of how those ways are numerous in which any religion may at any time be understood and acted up to by people who are possessed of different degrees of capacity and culture. That the *Gītā* takes cognisance of at least three ways of attaining salvation and God-realisation, as contemplated in the *Vēdāntic* religion of the Hindus, is a point about which Hindu orthodoxy may be seen to be

generally unanimous; and these three ways are commonly spoken of as *jñānamārga*, *bhakti-mārga* and *karma-mārga*. The first of these is 'the way of knowledge', and requires the practice of what we have called the austerity of thought. No other than a saintly philosopher is fitted to walk along that path so as to reach the goal assuredly and in full safety in the end. The second is 'the way of loving devotion', and requires the aspirant's rapture of the ecstatic love of God to be so intense as to make it impossible for him to consider anything other than God to be worthy of his love and attachment. To be able to reach the goal of salvation by moving along this path, one ought to be blessed with an appropriately attuned emotional temperament and a lovingly warm heart. The third way is 'the way of work'. This 'way of work', however, is capable of being understood in two ways, and appears to be really meant to be thus understood. By *karma-mārga* we may understand either the path of duty done for duty's sake, or the path of religious ceremonialism and rituals. In dealing with the question of the value of the ritual of sacrifice as an element of almost all religions, we saw, in the course of our study of the third chapter of the *Gītā*, that the moral conception of doing duty for its own sake is almost invariably a later development resting upon the earlier idea of legal obligatoriness in relation to the performance of sacrifices and other such religious rites and ceremonies. These two meanings of 'the way of work' represent merely two different stages of advance along the same path; and the one name of *karma-mārga* may therefore very well indicate either or both of them as the case may be. The life adapted to the way of work has in any case to be one of steady striving and successful accomplishment. It requires an active and energetic temperament on the part of the aspirant—a temperament, which spontaneously seeks work and feels very unhappy when there is no work at all to do. Accordingly, as we say in Sanskrit, each *mārga* has its own *adhikārin;* that is, each of these three paths has its specially worthy and qualified aspirant. The man of thought is generally seen to be unfit to be characterised either by highly accentuated emotion or by very energetic action, since both emotion and action are very often apt to act as hindrances in relation to calm meditation and deep thought. Similarly the man of emotion cannot easily manage to be either a man of thought or a man of steady and purposeful action. And the man of action is

generally so taken up with what he has to do, that he finds next to no time to bestow on thought or to spend in the experiencing of any emotional excitement. Therefore each of these typical religious pilgrims must have his own road for travelling towards the common goal of salvation and God-attainment; and we have now been assured that there are such special roads meant for the use of such special pilgrims. How all these roads are capable of leading the various kinds of aspirants to the same goal of God-attainment, we have in a way endeavoured to understand already. This will of course become clearer to us as we proceed.

The other meaning of *karma-mārga* as the path of *Vēdic* ritualism has also to be taken into consideration here. Is that also a path which is capable of leading men to the goal of God-attainment? I am sure you cannot have forgotten Śrī-Kṛishṇa's opinion regarding the value of this *Vēdic* path of ritualism. According to Him, those, who follow this path of ritualism and more or less fill their lives with the performance of *Vēdic* sacrifices, are persons that are actuated by selfish desires aiming at the enjoyment of pleasure and prosperity, and cannot therefore rise above the influence of the three 'qualities' of nature so fully as to become fit at once for securing the salvation of self-realisation and God-attainment. Clearly then Śrī-Kṛishṇa does not seem to have held this old *Vēdic* path of rituals and sacrifices in as high an esteem as the *Vēdāntic* path of self-realisation and God-attainment. The *Vēdic* path evidently seemed to Him to be not quite worthy of being adopted by aspirants after the salvation of *mōksha*. And when we were studying how Śrī-Kṛishṇa estimated the value of the religion of *Vēdic* rituals and sacrifices, we arrived at the conclusion that He did not think of it highly, but that He did not also discard it altogether. The question of *Vēdic* sacrifices and of their disciplinary value as aids to right conduct is taken up again here in this context, wherein we are told that all religious roads are capable of leading true and earnest worshippers to the goal of God-attainment. Whether the religion of *Vēdic* ritualism is also fit to be one of such roads, and under what special circumstances it would be so fit, are questions that are dealt with in some of the following *ślōkas;* and with a view to begin the discussion about them, the next *ślōka* gives

expresssion to the nature of the motive which is ordinarily behind the sacrificial worship of the *Vēdic* gods. Let us try and make out what that *ślōka* means.

काङ्क्षन्तः कर्मणां सिद्धिं यजन्त इह देवताः ।
क्षिप्रं हि मानुषे लोके सिद्धिर्भवति कर्मजा ॥ १२ ॥

12. Wishing to obtain the fruition of (ritualistic) works, (they) worship the gods here (in this world through sacrifices). Indeed, in the world of man, the fruition, that is born out of (ritualistic) works, is produced (quite) quickly.

That we have a clear reference to ritualistic works here is evident from the use of the Sanskrit word *yajantē* in the *ślōka.* That *karma* or work, which consists of the worship of the gods through sacrifices, cannot be anything other than ritualistic ; and all *Vēdic* sacrifices have a *phala* or desired end in view. Such an end may in fact be long life, or wealth, or progeny, or power, or paradise, or any other such thing. The motive of the performers of *Vēdic* sacrifices is generally to obtain one or more of these desired objects ; and the fruition of a ritualistic work consists therefore in the performer of the sacrifice obtaining the object for which he undertakes its performance. Since these objects are all worldly in character, their attainment is accomplished sooner than the attainment of the salvation of *mōksha.* Who does not know that the acquisition of the discipline of unselfishness is harder than the religious search after the objects of worldly enjoyment ? Since *Vēdic* ritualism merely tends to sanctify selfishness, so to say, and since the objects that men selfishly aim at are all generally of a worldly character, their attainment is quite possible within the course of even a single embodied life of an individual soul. A poor man may in this manner soon enough become rich, or a childless man may have children born to him, through the grace of the gods who have been propitiated by means of sacrifices. But a selfish man can neither so easily nor so quickly be converted into an unselfish aspirant after the salvation of final emancipation and God-attainment. Indeed, we all know very well how difficult it is to overcome the wishfulnsss of the will ; and

unless a man's heart is freed from the wishfulness of the will so completely as to make selfishness become utterly incompatible with his mental constitution, he cannot hope to win such salvation. To win the salvation of the soul by liberating it altogether from the bondage of *karma* is undoubtedly a much worthier and decidedly more valuable achievement than to obtain long life or wealth or children or power or even paradise itself. Nevertheless, the common man's tendency generally is to seek and to obtain the more immediate advantage, although it may be much less valuable than another advantage for which he has to strive longer and also to wait longer. Such is the incompatibility between the aim of *Vēdic* ritualism and that of *Vēdāntic* self-liberation; and yet the path of *Vēdic* ritualism may also be made to lead one to the goal of the *Vēdānta*. How this can be done, we shall learn as we proceed. If this, however, cannot be at all accomplished, then the statement, that all religious paths lead ultimately to the same God as their goal, ceases to be true. To consider such a statement to be untrue is in fact nothing short of giving up our faith in the oneness of God and in the reality as well as the wisdom of His loveful government of the universe. How the ordinarily selfish *Vēdic* ritualism may be transformed into an effective instrument of self-realisation and God-attainment must therefore be a question of more than ordinary interest to all students and followers of the Hindu religion. Before we actually take up this question into our consideration, we have to study with some attention the Indian institution of the four castes, as it is known to have a close relation to the religion of *Vēdic* ritualism, and is accordingly dealt with in the very next *ślōka*. This question of caste we shall study in our next class.

XX

The last subject, with which we were dealing in our last class, related to the value of ritualistic works as a means of divine worship. We took this into our consideration in connection with a brief examination of how the comparatively low estimate given by Śrī-Krishṇa of the religion of *Vēdic* ritualism may be reconciled with the broadly catholic doctrine that all religious roads lead to God. Religions like Judaism and the older Brahmanism of the Hindus are known to be 'legal'—or *nomothetic*—as some students of comparative

religion call them. They are limited in their range by considerations of birth and nationality, and are largely based on status and priestly rules of conduct and of divine worship. In their very design they are lacking in what is spoken of as the spirit of universalism. Therefore how can they be as good as other and more universal religions? And what is after all the meaning of the differentiation of status in relation to religion? Why need there be any connection between a man's social position and his religious function in life? Such are some of the questions which naturally rise in our minds, when we examine the details of the *śrauta-smārta* religion of *Vēdic* sacrifices; and the *ślōka* with which we begin our work to-day is intended to throw some light on those questions.

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।
तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ॥ १३ ॥

13. The system of the four castes was created by Me in accordance with the divisions of 'qualities' and works. Know Me to be its maker and also (its) non-maker.

This *ślōka* has been interpreted by a well known commentator so as to make it refer to the creation of the whole universe by God, who may well be conceived to be both its maker and non-maker at the same time. But the word *chāturvarṇya* definitely means the system of the four castes, and cannot without too much straining be made to include the whole of the universe within its significance. It is therefore right and proper to hold that this *ślōka* relates, primarily at all events, to the organisation of society on the basis of the caste-status. To all those, who know the difference between *Vēdic Brahmanism* and *Vēdāntic Hinduism*, it will be very easily intelligible how this *ślōka* about castes comes in quite appositely in the context here. The legal ritualism of *Vēdic Brahmanism* takes the caste-organisation of society for granted and has all its varied and innumerable details arranged accordingly. It is surely not amiss to say that at a particular stage in the development of civilisation almost all human communities happen to be organised more or less on the basis of status, and have therefore to be familiar enough with the

institution of caste or its equivalent in some manner or other. Moreover societies built on the old basis of status have almost invariably the authority of religion enlisted in behalf of their class-divisions and caste-institutions; and when, with the help of the progressive forces of advancing civilisation, such societies rise above the rigid control of settled status, it is seen often enough that the very same religion is used to help on their advancement towards a fuller recognition of popular equality and personal freedom. This kind of added helpfulness, which religion manifests under such circumstances, is invariably the result of infusing a new spirit into it first and then interpreting the old rule of life given therein in a fresher and freer light. But, as we have seen already, every step in the advancement of civilisation has to be in place as well as in time, and cannot therefore be other than right in so far as its own place and time are concerned. Although the old order incessantly changes giving place to a new one, it does not follow that the former is always altogether wrong or that the latter altogether right so as to be incapable of any further change for the better. In the time and the place suited for the new order, the old order would surely be very inappropriate and even harmful. Of course this has to hold true *vice versa* also. Consequently anything like a too rapid displacement of the unwanted old order is almost, if indeed not quite, impossible, and it is moreover utterly undesirable. Accordingly the caste-organisation of society which is referred to here as *chāturvarṇya* has to be interpreted in two ways. Indeed the word *varṇa*—understood as caste—denotes two different kinds of caste, namely, caste by birth and caste by quality. The former of these two kinds of caste is sometimes spoken of in Sanskrit as *janma-kṛita-varṇa* and the latter as *guṇa-kṛita-varṇa*. In India, as elsewhere, it was perfectly natural for caste by birth to come into vogue in society long before such a thing, as caste by quality, could even be thought of under the stimulating influence of the progressive advancement of politics or philosophy or religion. I remember having once before spoken to you about the influence of heredity in determining men's character and their capacity for culture; and you know that education also has at least an equally strong influence in moulding human character and in strengthening and improving human capacity. If heredity alone had such an influence, society would always be immobile and status for ever and altogether unchangeable. If, however, education alone had such an

influence, society would be too restless and too laxly bound together, and the authority of age and rank and tradition would therein obtain no recognition whatsoever. Therefore all progressive societies have to take note of both these influences and to guide themselves so as to be securely in line with both of them as far as possible. Nevertheless, there are different stages in civilisation which compel society to rely more largely either on the influence of heredity or on the influence of education as the case may be. The stage of relying more on heredity precedes generally that of relying more on education ; and the *ślōka* that we are now dealing with has to be interpreted in relation to both these stages of social advancement, as otherwise its significance is apt to be incompletely understood.

The divisions of qualities and works, in accordance with which the system of the four castes is declared to have been created, are those that have been referred to already in our class-lectures more than once. The qualities here mentioned are of course those, which Hindu philosophy attributes to *prakṛiti* or material nature ; and there are, as you know, three of them, namely, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is conceived that each of these qualities gives rise to a particular type of activity ; and the types of activity due to *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* are respectively called *sāttvika*, *rājasa* and *tāmasa*. What the nature of these qualities is, and what those types of activity are to which they are naturally related, will become plain to us when we shall study some of the later chapters of the *Gītā*. Let me, however, state here the important conclusions regarding these points briefly. It is through the operation of these three qualities of *prakṛiti* that the embodied soul continues to be confined in its material embodiment. Among these qualities, that which is known as *sattva* is purifying, illuminating and wholesome ; and it binds the soul to matter through the bonds of blissfulness and of thought. The quality of *rajas* is of the nature of attraction and acquisitiveness, and is the source of all covetousness and selfish attachment ; and it binds the soul to matter through the bond of work and achievement. Similarly, the quality of *tamas* is of the nature of non-luminous ignorance, and is ever the source of delusion to all embodied beings ; and it binds the soul to matter through inattention, sloth and sleepiness. The production of wisdom and internal illumination is accordingly

conceived to be the result of the dominant operation of the quality of *sattva*. When, however, the quality of *rajas* is dominant, it manifests itself in the form of covetousness, endeavour, activity, passion and ambition. The absence of internal illumination as well as of external endeavour, and the presence of inattention and delusion are invariably the results of the dominant operation of the dark quality of *tamas*. We thus see that the physical, mental, and moral temperaments of embodied beings are held to be determined by the dominance of some one or other of these three 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*. The fitness of men and women for living any particular kind of life and for performing the corresponding function in society is evidently determined by their natural temperament, which is in fact the same as their inborn endowment. And the dominance of this or that particular quality of *prakṛiti* in a man's constitution is in its turn the result of the life lived by him in previous states of embodiment. Using the Sanskrit terms, we may well say that the *guṇa* of a man's *prakṛiti* determines his fitness for the living of a particular kind of life, that is, for the due performance of particular forms of *karma* or work. The work for which the man of *sattva* is fitted is different from that for which the man of *rajas* is eligible; and the work for which the man of *tamas* is fitted is different from both of these. Still it is the *karma*, which is really due to a man's previous state of embodiment, that determines the dominant *guṇa* of the *prakṛiti* constituting his present embodiment. Accordingly, we are led to see that *guṇa* determines *karma*, which again in its turn determines *guṇa*. Each of these is thus capable of acting both as cause and as effect. The divisions of qualities and works mentioned in this *ślōka* are therefore of this nature; and in as much as 'qualities' are divided into *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, works are also similarly divided into *sāttvika* and *rājasa* and *tāmasa*. The creation of the system of the four castes is hence declared to rest on these divisions of *guṇa* and of *karma*, that is, on this doubly current relation of cause and effect which has been shown to exist between these two things. Let us now try to understand this somewhat more fully.

In the concluding chapter of the *Gītā* it is stated that that work is *sāttvika*, which is obligatory as duty and is free from all selfish aims, and is at the same time well performed—neither with desire nor with hatefulness in the heart—by one who is not covetous of reaping

any advantage as the reward of the work done : and we are also told there that accordingly that worker is *sāttvika*, who is free from selfish attachments and the feeling of *i-ness*, and is further so possessed of resolution and enthusiasm as to be wholly unaffected by success as well as by failure. Similarly that work is said to be *rājasa*, which is full of hard and trying difficulties and is done through covetousness or selfish egoism; and hence that worker is said to be *rājasa*, who is actuated by strong desires and is anxious to obtain for himself all the fruits of his own work, and is besides ungenerous, troublesome, impure and apt to be very freely swayed by joys and sorrows. Further that work is declared to be *tāmasa*, which is done under the influence of delusion and ignorance, without taking consequences and loss and capacity into consideration; and that worker is hence supposed to be *tāmasa*, who is inattentive, unskilled, dull, deceitful, vindictive, lazy, woe-begone and procrastinating. Moreover, that same chapter of the *Gītā* tells us that the work of Brahmins, Kshattriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras in life and in society has all been properly regulated in accordance with their natural qualifications; that peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, forgiveness, wisdom, insight and faith in God are characteristic of the life which is taken to be naturally Brahminical; that valour, heroism, courage, skilfulness, generosity, masterfulness and fighting to the bitter end, without running away from any battle, constitute the essential characteristics of such a life as naturally belongs to the true Kshattriya; that agriculture, cattle-breeding and commerce make up the natural occupation of the Vaiśya in life; and that the work of physical labour and personal service is that for which the Śūdra is understood to be naturally qualified. A little thought will clearly show to us at once that, in this apportionment of work to *varṇa* or caste, we have it evidently implied that the life of the Brahmin has to be almost absolutely *sāttvika* in character, the life of the Kshattriya to be dominantly *rājasa* and much less strongly *sāttvika*, the life of the Vaiśya to be largely *rājasa* and very feebly *sāttvika*, and the life of the Śūdra to be dominantly *tāmasa* and only slightly *rājasa* on occasions. Accordingly, the *prakṛiti* of the Brahminical body must be conceived to be such as is imbued markedly with the 'quality' of *sattva* and possesses as little as possible of the 'qualities' of *rajas* and *tamas*; and the *prakṛiti* of the body of

the Kshattriya is supposed to be dominantly endowed with the 'quality' of *rajas*, while the 'quality' of *sattva* is notably much less dominant therein and the 'quality' of *tamas* is almost as absent as in the *prakṛiti* of the Brahminical body. Similarly the body of him, who has to be Vaiśya, has to be made up of such *prakṛiti* as is prevailingly *rājasa* in character, having the 'quality' of *sattva* even less markedly and the quality of *tamas* somewhat more markedly than in the case of the body of the Kshattriya. The most assertive 'quality' in the case of the body of the Śūdra cannot of course be anything other than *tamas*, the two other 'qualities' of *sattva* and *rajas* being quite as insignificant in the composition of his body as the 'qualities' of *rajas* and *tamas* are in the *prakṛiti* of the Brahminical body. Such is the logical conclusion, we have had to arrive at, in regard to the typical constitution—physical, mental and moral—belonging to the various divisions in the system of the four castes, as determined by 'quality' and work. Please do not fail to bear in mind that we have so far been dealing with the theoretical position of how 'quality' and work are determinative of *varṇa* or caste.

This does not of course mean that caste-distinctions, as they are current now in India, are all in actual accordance with this theoretical position. We cannot say that the 'quality' of *sattva* is preponderant in the *prakṛiti* of every Brahmin now; for the life of many a Brahmin is sure to contradict quite openly any such statement. In the same way the actual conditions of the life of many, who are known to be Kshattriyas or Vaiśyas or Śūdras, do not agree with what theory postulates as their characteristic 'qualities'. In the existing state of Hindu social organisation, we may easily observe Brahmins characterised by such 'qualities' as rightly belong to the *prakṛiti* of Kshattriyas or Vaiśyas or Śūdras. We may similarly come upon Kshattriyas whose 'qualities' are those that ought to characterise the Brahmin or the Vaiśya or the Śūdra. And again Vaiśyas with non-Vaiśya 'qualities' are common enough, even as there are Śūdras with non-Śūdra 'qualities' in them. The reason for the theory of caste, as given here, disagreeing with the current practical conditions of Hindu society is, that, in practice, caste is still determined by birth but not by the 'qualities' of a person's *prakṛiti*. The history of the origin of aristocracies all over the world is of great interest to us here in this

connection. Everywhere we notice that the original founders of aristocratic families were men of distinction in the olden days, famous for character or ability or prowess. At first it is the true nobility of the father's qualities that deservedly bestows the honour of nobility on the descent of the son, who is naturally apt to be endowed like the father and is prone to emulate as well as to imitate him. The power of heredity to make the children resemble the parents in character and temperament must, to a great extent, have helped on the transmission of the original founder's aristocratic qualities from generation to generation. Thus the regime of status begins in society through the early and effective operation of certain human qualities, and is then kept up by means of the power of heredity. However, there soon comes a time when the privileged classes and families either forget the responsibilities corresponding to their privileges, or become, through degeneracy, incapable of bearing well the burden of those responsibilities. It is in the very nature of the protected monopoly of privileges, which the regime of status provides, that it should in time undergo deterioration in this manner; and unless great care is taken, no protected aristocracy in any society can fail to degenerate sooner or later into a body of pampered pretenders. Side by side with this decay of the ancient aristocracy dependent upon birth and hereditary status, we may observe the influence of hard experience and suitable education tending to improve the quality of the common people gradually, so as to make the privileged position of the protected aristocracy both anomalous and unjust as time proceeds. Soon after this condition of affairs is reached in any racially homogeneous society, the regime of status inevitably begins to disappear therefrom, and the organisation of that society ceases to depend upon any system of caste by birth. But even then the power of pedigree cannot be altogether extinguished: and the result is that both caste by birth and caste by quality—the latter more than the former—come to be operative in the life of such societies as are sufficiently well advanced in the manner I have indicated.

There is, however, a special situation wherein caste by birth may be seen to acquire a somewhat extraordinary amount of the power to endure; and that situation arises in those societies, which are racially composite and are therefore intercrossed by racial barriers.

If the plebians of Rome had been of a decidedly different race from the patricians, their social equalisation would not have taken place as easily as it did; and I remember that we have the authority of the historian Mommsen in support of the view, that, if the Roman slaves had been quite different in colour from their masters, Rome too might have had a social organisation similar to the Indian caste-system. When even such communities as have been racially homogeneous are known to have had distinctions of class and status based on heredity and on the legal regulation and control of marriage-relations, it is no wonder that in the midst of the racially heterogeneous population of India, even now characterised by dissimilar degrees of culture and capacity for improvement, the institution of caste by birth continues to command currency as well as respect. To some it may appear that India knows only caste by birth, but is unaware of caste by qualities. But they should know that the *Mahābhārata* upholds throughout caste by qualities as opposed to caste by birth; and the spirit of the *Bhagavadgītā* also is in this respect the same as that of the *Mahābhārata*. I drew your attention to the fact that in the *Bhagavadgītā* the Brahminical life, for instance, is declared to be that which is characterised naturally by peacefulness, self-control, austerity, purity, forgiveness, wisdom, insight and faith in God. If we, however, refer to *Manu-smṛiti*, which is the most important among the legal books appertaining to the *śrauta-smārta* aspect of our religion, often spoken of as 'Vedic Brahmanism', we find that there are six well known functions allotted to the Brahmin therein. These functions are—sacrificing to the gods, officiating as a priest at sacrifices, learning the *Vēdas*, teaching the *Vēdas*, the giving of religious gifts, and the receiving of religious gifts. Out of these the Kshattriyas and the Vaiśyas are entitled to perform only the first, the third and the fifth functions; and the Śūdra is declared to be fit only for the performance of personal service to Brahmins and Kshattriyas and Vaiśyas. Here I ask you to observe that, according to *Manu-smṛiti*, he who is born a Brahmin is entitled to perform certain functions in society; while, according to the *Bhagavadgītā*, he, who is in possession of certain specified qualities, is entitled to be a Brahmin. That it is desirable on the part of all those who are born as Brahmins to possess these Brahmin-making qualities comes out well enough from the *Manu-smṛiti* also. Nevertheless, there is no doubt

that, according to Manu, caste is based altogether on birth. The study of the Indian institution of caste, as it is now in operation among us, enables us to see easily that racial, tribal, vocational, and even geographical differences have contributed to make the caste-divisions of the people much more numerous than the theoretical four; and Manu attributes even this multiplication of divisions to birth, it being due according to him to the permitted as well as the prohibited sexual relations of the men and women of each of the four theoretical castes with those of the other three. Modern research does not bear out this view of making inter-caste sexual relations wholly responsible for the manifold multiplication of caste-divisions in India. Hence we may see the more distinctly the importance which Manu attached to birth as the one determining factor of caste-status. I have already spoken to you in some detail about the evils of *varṇa-saṅkara* or of the mixing up of castes as determined by race and by the inherited capacity for moral and intellectual culture. It is, as you know, with a view to guard Indian society against the danger of social and moral degradation, that *varṇa-saṅkara* through marriage has been prohibited; and hence, in so far as marriage is concerned, caste by birth continues uncancelled in India even to-day, in spite of the free and universal dispensation of the *Vēdānta* having in many other respects superseded the dispensation of the *Vēdic* religion of race and birth-status.

Thus the later *Vēdāntic* ideal of caste by quality has had to be limited by the necessary prohibition of unwholesome *varṇa-saṅkara*: and the necessity of this prohibition is due to the heterogeneous complexity of the composite social life which Hinduism has had to regulate and to guide along the lines of peaceful progress. The religion of the Hindus recognises fully in theory the spiritual equality and brotherhood of man in respect of all other relations in life than the one relation of marriage. In respect of marriage alone caste by birth and status has not been abrogated, as indeed it safely could not be. It is no doubt true that even this limited sanction bestowed on caste by birth and status has tended to give it a much larger vogue than is allowable in accordance with the strict interpretation of the theoretical position of the *Vēdānta* in this matter. But it cannot be denied without violating truth that India has known centuries of

earnest religious endeavour, during which innumerable Hindu reformers have laboured with heroic ability and earnestness and sacrifice to work out more and more largely the practical enforcement of the ennobling and enfranchising ideas of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The *Upanishadic* proclamation of the spiritual equality of man to man necessarily knocked away the bottom of the institution of caste by birth and status; and since, as you know, even bottomless institutions manage sometimes, through their very inertia, to drag on in history for some length of time, outside onlookers are apt to consider that in Hindu society caste by birth and status has not as yet been in any manner superseded by any thing like caste by quality. But Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, Madhva, Chaitanya and all the other well known Hindu religious reformers, and the whole host of our famous Śaiva and Vaishṇava saints and devotees, belonging to all castes and to all parts of India, did not live and labour in vain in what to them was undoubtedly the holiest of all holy lands. Although it is true enough that changing social conditions sometimes compel the progress of thought in the direction of sanctioning greater freedom and fuller equality, still such an advancement of thought more often precedes the progressive reformation of social institutions. Indeed this latter order, namely, that of thought preceding practice, seems to be the rule; and in respect of societies which are not democratically organised, this rule invariably holds good. Thus the inequality, which is current in practice, takes time to be corrected by the doctrine of equality, which is sanctioned by thought. And when thought sanctions equality with a reservation, as it has done in the case of the heterogeneous Hindu society, all that practical reform can do is to endeavour to reconcile the inevitable inequality with the larger and more comprehensive equality. Thus the unity of Hindu society has had to be like the unity of a federation of more or less self-governing states; it has been a unity realised in the midst of much unavoidable variety. In most ancient organisations of society, the community is known to have been all in all, while the individual counted for next to nothing. This has necessarily to be the case wherever status rules the social regime. But when the regime of status becomes weakened, if not exploded, the value of the individual rises, and he grows to be able to assert himself more and more. The result of these tendencies—in favour of and against equality—has been to make

Hindu society become divided by a number of internal compartments. The main object of this compartmental construction of Hindu society is clearly to prevent *varṇa-saṅkara* through marriage, by permitting generally what may be called intra-compartmental marriages, while prohibiting at the same time inter-compartmental relations between the sexes as far as possible. This compartmental division of society, in so far as it is recognised by the *Vēdānta*, gives no support to the idea that any compartment therein is superior or inferior to any other as a compartment. In a bee-hive we do not say that any one cell is superior or inferior to any other in rank. That such is really the accepted theoretical position in regard to Hindu society cannot be gainsaid by us, so long as that society recognises fairly widely—even as it really does now—that among Śūdras by birth there have been and may well be Brahmins by quality, or that among Brahmins by birth there have been and may well be Śūdras by quality. In other words, it is granted by many orthodox Hindu teachers that all castes by quality may be, and are, found among all castes by birth. It is evident, moreover, that the ideal to be aimed at by all the members of all the compartments is to become Brahmins by quality; and this unity of what is clearly an ethical social ideal is a powerful cement which is able to hold together the various compartments of Hindu society. It is through the spread of this ideal largely that outer additions are made every now and then to the compartments of Hindu society; for, such addition in fact, is the way in which Hinduism proselytises and spreads purity and morality among the many casteless communities that are still moving about on the border-land of well evolved Hindu life.

Having thus understood what caste was in India in ancient days and what it has come to be now under the influence of the *Vēdānta*, we may proceed to make out what is implied by Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as God incarnate, saying that He created the system of the four castes. Let us note that He does not say that He created this system to be current only in India: nor does He say that His creation thereof was in His capacity as the God of the Hindus. We have already seen that even the most democratically organised human communities have had to pass through the regime of status before they could well adopt the regime of contract and equality; and no human society—however highly free

and democratic its constitution may be—can rise above the distinction of caste by quality. That distinction of man from man, which is dependent upon the innate difference in men's temperamental qualities and endowments, can never be wiped away altogether, so long as man continues to be a spirit that is clothed in flesh. That is why caste by birth and status has had to be historically universal among human communities, and caste by quality cannot well be less widely current than the very humanity of man is among mankind. Those, who say that caste is uniquely the curse of India, and that all our weaknesses and failings and sufferings and disabilities to-day are attributable to this accursed institution of caste, will do well to bear in mind the historical universality of caste by status and the physical and physiological universality of caste by quality, not to mention the spreading prevalence of the comparatively more modern and very much less justifiable institution of such a thing as caste by wealth. The manifestation of inequality in society is therefore natural and inevitable, howsoever much the manner of its manifestation may vary from time to time or from place to place. This being the case, there can be nothing wrong in conceiving God to be the creator of caste. The famous *Purusha-sūkta*, to which I drew your attention in another connection, and in which we have what is understood to be the *Vēdic* authority for the Indian institution of caste, often comes in for a lot of ignorant and abusive criticism at the hands of prejudiced and impatient critics, whose chief aim seems to be to malign and subvert the most highly philosophical and the most comprehensively tolerant and universal religion of the Hindus. That sublime *Vēdic* hymn deals, as you are aware, with how God by sacrificing Himself created the visible universe and all its varied contents, and describes how the various component parts of the universe arose out of the several limbs of the Divine Victim so sacrificed. It is stated therein that the mouth of the Divine Victim became the Brāhmaṇa, that His two arms were made into the Rājanya or Kshattriya, that His two thighs became what the Vaiśya is, and that the Śūdra was born out of His two feet. Please note the functional appropriateness observable herein, as existing in relation to the various castes and the various limbs of the sacrificed God, out of which those castes are declared to have arisen. The mouth is the organ of speech, and speech is the medium for the expression of thought

and the propagation of knowledge and learning. The function assigned to the Brahmin in society being largely that of the religious and philosophical teacher, we cannot fail to make out the meaningfulness of the mouth of the sacrificed God becoming the Brāhmaṇa. In many a language the arm has become figuratively representative of power, prowess and valorous heroism; and if we bear in mind that the function of the Kshattriya in life is to serve society as soldier and sovereign, we may make out equally easily the meaning of the arms of the sacrificed God being made into the Rājanya. It is, however, not quite so easy to understand the naturalness of the relation between the thighs of the sacrificed God and the function of the Vaiśya in life. If, however, we observe that the Vaiśya has to be society's staying power and seat of wealth, so to say, the statement regarding his origin in the *Purusha-sūkta* may acquire its due functional significance. It may be that the Vaiśya is expected, even as he is quite comfortably seated at home, to go on acquiring and at the same time accumulating wealth. This may be the functional appropriateness that is meant here. However, I am sure it must be clear to you that I am now very freely indulging in what is no more than a mere guess. But in respect of the Śūdra, whose function it is ever to render personal service to others, and who has therefore to move about hither and thither and often to stand and to wait, his birth from the feet of the sacrificed God is not without natural and appropriate significance. Hence, the trend of the thought here is clearly in the direction of the functional partition of society into castes, the various functions of the castes being obviously determined by their fitness to perform them. The caste referred to in the *Purushasūkta* is therefore that which I have called caste by quality, although we cannot well say that the idea of status as high and low is altogether absent in relation to the four caste-divisions mentioned therein. The mouth is indeed higher than the arms, which are higher than the thighs, which again are higher than the feet in position. Thus, Brāhmaṇa, Kshattriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra come here in the order of the standing ordinarily assigned to them in society. That society honours those, who, in the language of Carlye, with heaven-made implements conquer heaven for us, more than it honours those, who, with earth-made implements, conquer the earth for us, is very generally observable even among such people as have noticeably set

aside caste by birth in their practical life. Moreover, this *Vēdic* hymn, which deals with the problem of universal creation and of the creation of man as a part thereof, cannot naturally be expected to deal with caste as an exclusively Indian institution. We thus see that both the *Vēdic* and the *Vēdāntic* scriptures of the Hindus maintain that social inequality is quite natural and therefore inevitable in all human communities, and that caste with its many and varied forms of manifestation is thus evidently God-made.

Objection may well be taken against this position, which declares God Himself to be the creator of caste; and critics may readily point out that it tends to attribute arbitrary and unfair partiality to God, and makes Him appear harsh as well as unjust in His government of the universe. It is evidently with a view to counteract such a possible objection that we have it stated in this stanza, which deals with caste, that God is the 'maker' of caste as well as its 'imperishable non-maker'. A statement like this may very naturally seem to many of you to be a contradiction in terms. Nevertheless, it can be shown that, according to the tenets of Hindu philosophy, it is quite strictly true that God is the 'maker' of caste at the same time that He is also its ever-enduring 'non-maker'. You have been distinctly told already that what a man is born to be in this life is determined for him by the *karma* of his previous lives—in fact by that particular portion of his accumulated *karma* which has ceased to be purely statical and has become dynamic and operative, that is, by what in Sanskrit is called his *prārabdha-karma*. If we know that every man ultimately makes and acquires his own *karma*, it is easy to see how, what he did before at one time or other in the course of his previous reincarnations, is responsible largely for what he now is. Consequently, the inequalities of endowment and natural environment, which we notice in relation to the component members of all human communities all over the world, are what those members have in reality made for themselves. Nobody can rightly deny that there is absolute justice in one having to reap whatsoever one has sown. In this sense, God is not the maker of caste; He is its non-maker. It is a man's *prārabdha-karma* which operates, so as to make the quality of *sattva* or *rajas* or *tamas* become preponderant in his nature, and which thereby determines

whether he is to be by quality a Brahmin or a Kshattriya or a Vaiśya or a Śūdra. It is evident that *karma* operates thus with the aid of *prakṛiti*. And that *prakṛiti* is God's own: it belongs to Him who is the Lord of all beings. In other words, the laws of *prakṛiti* are as He has willed and ordained them to be. There are some, who say that the essence of religion consists in understanding that the laws of nature are what they are, because God has ordained that they should be so. Whether we wholly agree with them or not, there can be no doubt that the theistic conception of the universe necessarily looks upon nature as an obedient handmaid of God. Consequently the ultimate author of the law of *karma* can be no other than God. As the author of the law of *karma*, God is obviously the 'maker' of caste, inasmuch as the inequalities and variations in the natural endowments and environments of individuals are mainly traceable to their *karma*. If, as long as we consider it to be perfectly just that men should reap what they sow, the justice of the law of *karma* can in no way be disputed, then the result follows that the inevitable incidence of inequalities on individuals in society cannot indicate in any way that God is either arbitrary or unjust. This same view regarding God's impartial justice is distinctly given expression to in the *Vēdānta-sūtras* of Bâdarâyaṇa. Now let me illustrate what I have said, regarding how it is that God is both the maker and the non-maker of caste, by means of a familiar example. Take the case of a magistrate who awards punishment to those criminals who are proved to be guilty. The magistrate guides himself in accordance with law, and also inflicts the punishment on the criminal in accordance with law. And yet it is true that the kind of crime which any criminal commits is responsible for the kind of punishment that is inflicted on him in accordance with law. When a man commits a crime and is then punished by the magistrate, we say rightly that the punished criminal really brought the punishment on himself by means of his own culpable misdeeds. If, however, this same criminal belonged to a society which had no regular government and no law, and in which therefore there would be no police and no magistracy, then his guilty deeds would in themselves prove powerless to subject him to any kind of legally inflicted punishment. Or, the law might be there: but, if there were no strong and efficient government, then also the guilt of the criminal would

in all probability go unpunished. Therefore, in addition to the criminal deed and the law, we require also a magistracy with effective power, if we wish to make sure that deeds of crime receive their due punishment. In this way, it is the magistrate who becomes responsible for the punishment that is inflicted upon the criminal. When we look upon the criminality of his deed as the real cause of his punishment, we do not hold the magistrate responsible for the punishment that is inflicted upon the criminal. From this standpoint the magistrate is the non-maker of the punishment, the maker thereof being the criminal's guilty deed itself. But when we note that, without the help of an organised government and an efficient magistracy, the deed in itself would be incapable of giving rise to the punishment, we are naturally led to declare that the magistrate is the 'maker' of the punishment. And in whichever way we look upon him, whether as the 'maker' or as the 'non-maker' of punishment, it is impossible for him to be unjust, so long as he discharges the duties of his office conscientiously and in strict accordance with the law that is fully and finally based on justice and is well designed to administer justice. If God, after having duly willed the just law of *karma*, allowed freedom for embodied souls to make or mar their own progress towards attaining the goal of self-realisation and God-realisation, and if this freedom was used well by some and ill by others among them, so that inequalities thereby came into existence in connection with almost all of them, then surely He cannot be blamed as the unjust author of these inequalities. Nor can we, under such a circumstance, say that inequality itself is injustice. Surely there are situations in which equality may very well spell injustice.

Those that are accustomed to strongly democratic ways of thought, and have had their lot cast in a civilisation which is comparatively more democratic in spirit than some others are,—such persons are apt to jump to the conclusion that inequalities belonging to civilisations other than their own are altogether insupportable and utterly unjust. They put up easily enough with that kind of caste which is current in their own society and civilisation, and fail to see any kind of injustice in its currency in their midst. But, when it is another kind of caste current in another society or civilisation,

they become easily indignant and vehemently protest against the injustice of its inequalities. I have pointed out to you that in this country we have, under the influence of the *Vēdānta* and of Śaivism and Vaishṇavism as based thereon, succeeded in making caste by quality supersede caste by birth as far as possible. The adoption of the later ideal of caste by quality has not, it is true, enabled us to get rid of caste by birth in respect of all our varied relations in life. The consequence has been that, even among us, there are some, who see in this imperfection nothing short of hopeless inconsistency and injustice and an absolute want of equity. When such persons blame Hindu civilisation for the scope it gives for the operation of caste by birth in a society declared to be hallowed by the higher ideal of caste by quality, we may ask them whether they will freely give their daughters, if they have any, in marriage to men whom they know to be decidedly of low birth and inferior rank. They will often enough have no objection to their sons marrying women of higher birth ; but they are certain to disapprove and even prohibit their daughters marrying men of lower birth. We almost daily hear some of the common Christian missionaries from Europe and America loudly condemning our caste and telling us that all the inequalities of caste, which are current in our society, are altogether unwarranted and iniquitous. Let us take a missionary of that kind and ask him to tell us fairly and frankly, if he will give his own daughter in marriage, say, to a pariah convert, whom he may himself have had the great privilege of bringing into the fold of Christ. Will he do it ? He may at best say—"From the standpoint of my religion, I can have no objection to my daughter marrying a pariah convert of mine, if she herself likes to do so. Only our social sentiments rebel against it, and our racial instincts make it almost impossible". These social sentiments and racial instincts are not, however, unmeaning ; and there can be no doubt, as I have already told you, that they have been much more helpful than hurtful to the advancement of humanity along the path of progressive civilisation and spirituality. If the European or American missionary's daughter married the pariah, there would in the end be real degradation and loss of moral power in relation to the offspring of such a marriage. The offspring would not be, in point of potency for culture and civilisation, so much above the father's as below the mother's level. A very wide range of human

experience shows this to be true, and modern scientific enquirers also seem to have accepted it as true. Let us not forget that in this country we have had for many thousands of years communities belonging to different races and different tribes, and possessing very different capacity for culture and occupying very different levels of civilisation, living side by side in peace and in amity. Such evidently has not been the case with the homeland of the Christian missionary from the West. Wherever there is a passably fair racial unity among the inhabitants of a country, there marriage-relations between men and women need not be subjected to more than ordinary restrictions and limitations. Where, however, the people are heterogeneous in colour and race and are mostly composed of communities occupying markedly different levels of civilisation, there marriage cannot be allowed to be quite so free and unguided and unrestrained. Otherwise, man is certain to decay, and his humanity certain to become degraded. Therefore, where religion does not authoritatively stand in the way of too free inter-racial and inter-caste marriages, social sentiments and racial instincts take upon themselves the duty of preventing civilisation from undergoing decay or deterioration through unsuitable admixture of blood. And when those sentiments and instincts begin to operate freely, they invariably do so in a manner, which we, in this country, cannot even think of without great horror and disgust.

Whether it is better to rely upon religion, or to rely upon racial and social instincts, to safeguard society and civilisation from that kind of deterioration, which is certain to arise in consequence of the unrestricted intermixture of unequally cultivated and ill adjusted tribes and races and communities, is a question to which the lynch-law, so freely resorted to by the Whites as against the Blacks in the southern states of the United States of America, cannot fail to give an emphatic and adequate answer. When, under the banner of one of the freest of republican governments, and among a people professing one of the most cosmopolitan and humanitarian religions in the world, the barbarities of lynching and such other ugly acts have to be utilised to protect society from the decay that may arise from racial corruption, then that religious authority, which prudently places restrictions upon undesirable marriages, cannot certainly be ridiculed and laughed at with freedom or impunity. The politically

inhuman and morally unwholesome character of the influence of racial assertivenesss and isolation is becoming only too plainly visible now in all those parts of the world, where the lot of the white man is cast in the midst of those whom he in contempt calls coloured peoples. South Africa and Australia, for instance, have only to be mentioned to enable us to see how bitter and harsh and insolent race-feeling may so very often become. Just as what may very well be described as inclusive toleration is the underlying foundation of Hindu religious unity, the policy of what I frequently speak of as conciliatory co-ordination constitutes the underlying foundation of Hindu social unity. It is therefore no wonder that one of the least biassed and most earnest and far-seeing among thoughtful Christian missionaries in Madras declared some years ago, that Hinduism recognises the solidarity of man more markedly than any other religion known to history. In a book written by Sir George Campbell—who must be known by name to many in this country as a distinguished European civil servant and as an anthropologist of some note—after he travelled in the United States of America with a view to study the nature of the relation between the Whites and the Blacks there, he has deliberately given it out as his conclusion that it would indeed have been very good for the United States to have adopted a social institution like the Indian caste-system. In that book he has said—"In India I have had the experience of how communities of people, varying in character, culture and rank and racial qualifications, have lived for centuries amicably side by side; and this has been possible in India only through the organisation of caste". After coming to know this opinion so assuredly expressed by such a man, who is there among us that can curse our institution of caste unhesitatingly and altogether? It may not be now possible for the United States to organise for the benefit of the people therein an institution like the Indian caste. That, however, is not what we are concerned about now. Nevertheless, Sir George Campbell's true insight into the historic aim and effect of caste in India ought to enable us to set a distinctly high value on the undoubtedly humanitarian purpose and far-sighted wisdom of our ancient religious law-givers. Caste has fairly unified in India such heterogeneous racial and social elements among the people as have stubbornly resisted all attempts at any kind of

unification elsewhere. Racial and religious animosities can be and have been in fact appeased nowhere quite so easily as in India. A little of sincere sympathy and a little of mutual forbearance and goodwill, becoming visible through a few well-aimed acts of common kindliness and helpfulness, can soon bridge here all such great moral gulfs of human separation as are almost unbridgeable in lands which are swayed by other and less cosmopolitan civilisations. Think of the crusades and of the fate of the Moors in European history! Or think of the persecutions of the Christian Church in its mad and unbridled frenzy to enforce an impossible and meaningless religious conformity! Then bring to your mind how Hindu India has given shelter and support and encouragement to homeless Jews and Parsis, and has by the free offer of philosophic friendliness made iconoclastic Islam notably calm and tolerant and philosophic! The contrast cannot but be striking and instructive. Some are of course apt to see mere weakness in this historic spirit of Hindu conciliation. But we do not generally conciliate those whom we may very well ignore. Nor do those become easily reconciled to us who feel that there can be no harm whatsoever in taking no account of us at all. Hence conciliation really rests on the recognition of mutual strength and worth, and has a more becoming moral meaning than any kind of aggression and continued cat-fight. That any good man is in his place as worthy as any other good man is in his, is a lesson that is always and everywhere well worth learning; and it is because our ancestors were made to learn this lesson early, our mother-land has been for so many centuries an unparallelled home of peaceful avocations and high aspirations, in spite of the storm and stress of innumerable opposing forces that have long had in it an abundant play. Therefore our ultimate pronouncement on caste in India cannot but be that it has indeed helped very much more than it has hindered progress and civilisation among us, inasmuch as it has succeeded well in India in producing out of very heterogeneous elements a quiet, law-abiding and self-respecting people, whose long and glorious history is remarkably full of so many things that are true and good and beautiful.

Accordingly, whether we take caste by birth or caste by quality into consideration, we cannot surely fail to see the justice of making

the functions of persons in society depend upon the natural endowment and temperamental qualities with which they are born. In a society ruled by the regime of status, the differentiation of men's varied functions therein is necessarily determined by the position which their birth gives to them. In such a society, birth gives more often than not, the truest, the readiest and the most convenient measure of the endowments and qualities of individuals. We cannot afford to forget how very true it is in history, that whatever is is right. This of course does not at all mean that history knows no wrong and no injustice. It would be altogether untrue to say so. But what it really means is that whatever endures for a fairly long time in history serves during that period some definite and naturally requisite purpose. Otherwise there would assuredly be no need for its enduring so at all. And such things, as are not really wanted, arise rarely, if ever, in history. If we keep this great fact of history in mind, we are sure to see at once that the regime of status in society—wherever and whenever such a regime actually comes into existence—is like all other events and conditions in history the result of the operation of natural causes. Therefore, as such a result, it cannot surely be out of due normality in its own time and in its own circumstances. Students of geology often say that, in the geological procession of the successive evolution of animal life, fish life, for instance, preceded reptile life, and that amphibian life manifested itself naturally in the interval and served as the required intermediate step in helping on the progress of the evolution. Zoologists tell us that reptile life represents a higher stage of animal evolution than fish life does. But it does not at all follow from this that the lower fish life deserves in any way to be called wrong, simply because it is the lower. All later regimes of social life are everywhere seen to be evolved out of more or less different earlier regimes; and what we ought to say therefore is not that all the earlier regimes are wrong, while the later ones are all right, but that the earlier regimes were also right in their respective times and places and circumstances, and have hence been useful as the necessary basis of later and higher developments. Viewed in this light, caste by birth cannot be said to be wrong, nor caste by quality to be absolutely right. There is no doubt that caste by quality represents a higher stage of social development than caste by birth; and social progress very

often means the passage of a society from conditions that require, and are favourable to, caste by birth to conditions that are agreeable to caste by quality. Nevertheless, we must not forget that, in the regime of caste by birth, status is not altogether undetermined by quality. So long as heredity happens to be a channel for the descent of endowment and temperamental qualities from generation to generation in a family—and education is neither sufficiently widespread nor sufficiently effective to modify markedly the influence of heredity with appreciable rapidity—so long, caste by birth is certain to continue to flourish in society and to be fairly accurately determined and controlled by inherited endowments and innate temperamental qualities. Accordingly, in the case of caste by birth also—wherever it has not lingered too long through inertia to be any more helpful to progress—the functions of individuals in society may happen to be related appropriately to their qualities. Even their religious functions and privileges may be different, if only all those functions harmonise together so well as to serve the general good of the whole community. Where, however, society has acquired more of what they in these days call individualism, and men are allowed freedom to choose that kind of life and that path of religious discipline for which they feel they are most fitted,—there, it is quality which directly and immediately determines function. So, in this evolution also, all roads lead to God.

In concluding the study of this important *ślōka*, which has taken up all our time to-day, let me briefly point out to you that it tells us that the logical relation, between men's endowments and temperamental qualities on the one hand and the functions for which they are naturally fitted on the other, determines for them their duties in life, even as it may indeed determine for them the nature of their religion itself. We may quite appropriately say that all men and women are in fact born to do duty; and the duty, which each of them has to do, is not left to be determined by his or her own whims and fancies, but is imposed upon that person with incontestable authority by nature, whose aim has been shown to be nothing other, or less kindly, than to help on the final liberation of all those souls which have through their own *karma* become entangled in matter. Accordingly, as long as there has to be any kind of differentiation of duty in society, the extremely democratic ideal of absolute social

equality in life cannot surely be anything better than an irrational and impossible dream.

XXI

In our last class we dealt with the rationality and meaning and aim of the division of human society into four typical castes. We saw that such a division is very natural among mankind, and that almost all human communities have had a stratified structure, the strata being in some cases somewhat more unchangeable and more rigidly fixed in position than in others. Hence the open recognition of the spiritual equality of all human beings need not be inconsistent with such social inequalities as are natural and are due to the very constitution of the various inherited bodies of embodied souls; and this kind of naturalness and universality in relation to these inequalities justifies us in maintaining that they also must be God-made. Where social inequalities are inevitable, one of the ways in which they may be made to be ungalling and harmless is by adopting the policy of conciliatory co-ordination and arranging the unequal communities in collateral compartments in the same plane, so to say, so that each such compartment may feel a pride in its own history and progress. This has in fact been the long established Indian plan, as you know. Nevertheless, the inequalities are there inevitably, as they have been produced through the operation of the just and God-ordained law of *karma*. Since, according to this universal law, the kind of life, that one lived before in previous conditions of embodiment, is really responsible in every way for the kind of life for which one is now fitted, it follows necessarily and as a matter of course that, in spite of God, as the omnipotent ordainer of the law of *karma*, being Himself the ultimate originator of inequalities in all human societies, we are ourselves the makers of what happens to be our lot in the world wherein we are born. Therefore, beyond ordaining the just law of *karma* and setting it in operation, He does, out of partiality or prejudice, nothing which influences for better or for worse the lot of any individual embodied soul in His universe. Thus He, as the Divine Sovereign, fulfils, without partiality and without prejudice, His high function as the incorruptible fountain of justice in His noble and righteously ordered government of the universe. That is how He is 'the imperishable non-maker' of all those inequalities which are

found in the life of embodied souls. The universe is ruled by law and justice, but not by any sort of arbitrary and despotic discretion; and God, who is the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, is therefore altogether untainted by the unjust bias of partiality or of any selfish attachment. Otherwise, He also would have had to become subject to the limiting bondage of *karma*. Such indeed is the universal prevalence of this God-ordained law of *karma*. Even the omnipotent ordainer of that law of *karma* has accordingly to act carefully up to all its altruistic requirements, if He wishes to be really free from the penalties which it imposes on all those, who do not carry out its requirements well and wisely. We ought to see from this that the potency of justice is, according to the teachings given in the *Gītā* by Śrī-Kṛishṇa, even higher than that of divine omnipotence. And now let us proceed with our study of the *Gītā* for today.

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥ १४ ॥

14. Works do not cling to Me; I have no desire for the fruit of works: (he), who makes Me out to be such,—he does not become bound by *karma*.

We have seen how, although God is ultimately the creator of caste, He cannot rightly be held to be responsible for the inequalities which are naturally and unavoidably current everywhere in all human societies. Surely none who is biassed, owing to the influence of the forces of interest and attachment, can manage to uphold absolute justice unerringly and to bring it well into effective working order irrespective of consequences. Therefore, whoever upholds justice absolutely and sets it freely and fully in operation,—he must be altogether free from all bias and interest and selfish attachment. God, as the ordainer of the just law of *karma* and as the impartial dispenser of justice according to that law, is evidently bound to be, and is, free from all such vicious bias and interest and attachment. This kind of freedom from attachment is itself due in His case to His having no selfish desire of any kind. Although He is, as the fountain-source of all power in the universe, the most unceasing and the most efficient among the workers therein, still His freedom from all selfish desire makes it wholly impossible for any taint of

karma to cling to Him. It is obviously for this reason that works do not cling to Him. That God has in this manner allowed justice to work out its own course is true, not only in relation to the manifestation of inequalities in human societies, but also in relation to the entire work of creation as it has all along gone on in His created universe. You have already learnt that the *Vēdānta* considers the purpose, with which God has in His wisdom created the universe, to be the strengthening of the spiritual power of embodied souls, so as to make it more and more easily possible for them to win back once for all their final salvation of emancipation and become free from all imposed disabilities and limitations. So far as God is concerned, this aim can in no way be selfish ; evidently it is altogether altruistic. Therefore, even in spite of the existence of such a purpose in the mind of God, He can be, and is really, free from all forms of selfish desire in relation to everything that goes to make up His grand work of universal creation. It is in this way that He may be said to be the 'maker' and at the same time the 'non-maker' of the whole of the created universe. Here in fact is to be found the justification for interpreting the expression *chāturvarṇya* in the previous *ślōka* in so comprehensive a manner as to make it include the whole of the universe within its significance. Anyhow, it has to be distinctly understood by every one of us that, by ordaining the just law of *karma* and allowing it freely and effectively to operate in the universe, God, who is Himself its creator and protector, has succeeded in making it impossible for the bondage of *karma* to impose limitations upon Him. We are in consequence told here that to make out that God works in this manner in His own universe in guiding it to the goal, which He has Himself appointed for it, is well calculated to enable us also to get out of the necessity of becoming subject to the bondage of *karma*, even though we unceasingly live the life of willing labour and active achievement.

Here also we have distinctly to bear in mind that it is not a merely intellectual realisation of the manner of God's work in His universe that is thus calculated to bestow on men and women such freedom from the imprisoning influence of *karma*. You may remember we had to understand in one of our previous classes the statement how that a knowledge of the nature of divine incarnation and of the life

of the incarnated God-man is well suited to make us rise above the tendency to re-incarnation, so that we may, after acquiring it, go as a matter of course to God, who is the ultimate home of all embodied and enfranchised souls. We then made out clearly that that liberating knowledge had to be more than merely intellectual, that it had to embrace within the compass of its meaning such practical conduct in life as is in complete harmony with the well ascertained nature of the birth of the God-man as well as of the life of the God-man. Similarly, that sort of practical realisation in life is obviously required here also. Therefore we have not only to know intellectually how and why it is that the binding taint of *karma* or work does not at all cling to God, but have also to adopt well in our own active lives that plan or manner of doing work which is in full agreement with His supremely benevolent purpose and infallibly unselfish and entirely altruistic conduct. Most of you, I am sure, have already learnt that to work through the agency of a just law is in this connection the chief practical lesson we have all to gather from our knowledge of God as a typical worker. The law through which God works is the indubitably just law of *karma*; and the law through which man has to work is indeed nothing other than the equally just and blameless law of duty. So long as our duty is determined for us by our natural fitness, and so long again as this fitness of ours is determined for us in accordance with the law of *karma*, which is in itself absolutely just, it is impossible for any of us not to see that the law of duty is indeed no less just than the law of *karma*. If we really do all our work in life in the manner in which it has to be done, whenever the doing of it happens to be our duty,—then it is our serene sense of moral obligation that becomes really the most important motive force in the guidance of our lives. If we do at all times whatever we do in life, simply because we know that we ought to do it, then surely there can be no selfish motive of any kind behind anything that we may ever happen to do. It is in this manner that the law of duty saves all those, who have to live the life of work, from the otherwise inevitable contamination of *karma*. Therefore to know, how and why it is that God is free from selfish desire and the consequent contamination of *karma*, is really helpful in enabling all people to learn how they may make themselves also so fully free from selfish desire as to be no longer apt to be subjected to the bondage of *karma*.

एवं ज्ञात्वा कृतं कर्म पूर्वैरपि मुमुक्षुभिः ।
कुरु कर्मैव तस्मात् त्वं पूर्वैः पूर्वतरं कृतम् ॥ १५ ॥

15. Knowing (it to be) thus, even ancient aspirants after deliverance did work. Therefore, do you (also) assuredly do work (as ordained) of old long ago, and (as) done by the ancients.

Why Śrī-Kṛishṇa should have drawn the attention of Arjuna to the fact, that even ancient seekers after the salvation of the soul understood the nature of good and righteous conduct in this light and did their duties in life accordingly, is a point which seems to me to be worthy of some attention here. You know how already in the *Bhagavadgītā* the authority of antiquity and old usage has been more than once adduced in favour of the philosophy of conduct that is taught therein. What may be the meaning of this appeal to the authority of antiquity and old usage? I believe I have once before pointed out to you that the authority of antiquity and continued usage has a tendency to add to what may be called the mystic dignity and the approved credibility of every religious and philosophical teaching, which may well happen to be in a position to claim such authority in favour of itself. According to the opinion of Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as given in this *ślōka*, His teaching, regarding how the life of work has to be lived, may be seen to be fully entitled to claim the support of such authority. If a particular path of wisdom or course of life, followed by ancient seekers of salvation, appears to have been capable of bestowing on them the deliverance, for which they were striving, how does it follow from this that that path of wisdom and that course of conduct are right in themselves and are therefore worthy to be adopted by all? No religious or philosophical teaching can be conceived to be right and worthy, simply because it rests on traditional antiquity and has the authority of old usage to support it. Indeed nothing can become true or right or worthy, merely on account of its being very old. The value of any particular path of life, that may have been taught with due authority in any religion, is dependent upon how far that path is conformably related to truth, and upon how far it is in consequence right and worthy

and calculated to give satisfaction and strength and encouragement to the sincere aspirant, who honestly and earnestly endeavours to follow that prescribed path. Still, we are, I believe, bound to see that all such paths of religious and moral conduct and realisation, as have the support of great antiquity and long usage, deserve on that very account to be at least presumed to be fairly worthy and right, till the contrary is distinctly proved in relation to them. The reason for this is, that such paths are certified to us to be right and worthy by the accumulated experience of a long line of earnest aspirants, who walked before our days along those same paths. How can it be denied that much of our wisdom in many spheres of life has come down to us as the sustained result of the thought and experience of our ancestors? A religious path that does not lead to the goal of truth and salvation, and is not helpful to man in enabling him to perfect his purity and strengthen his spiritual power, is apt to be quickly found out to be unworthy by every one, who is really an earnest aspirant after spiritual deliverance and final freedom. Accordingly, the experience and approbation of a long line of worthy aspirants should certainly be able to testify to the true helpfulness and worthy righteousness of the course of religious and moral life that has been so long followed by them. This of course does not mean that it is good for us to take our religion altogether on trust, so as to surrender completely our reason and conscience to the authority of ancient tradition and long continued usage. We are certainly in a position to say that such an idea must have been far from the mind of Śrī-Krishṇa, in as much as we find, almost at the end of the *Gītā*, that Arjuna, who was the disciple in the situation, was asked to consider carefully all that he was taught and then to do whatever seemed to him to be right and proper. Personal conviction is undeniably the best basis for a man's religious belief and for the guidance of his conduct in life. But unfortunately personal convictions are very frequently apt to be erroneous. The belief in the infallibility of personal conviction turns out to be frequently as wrong as the belief in the absolute authoritativeness of old usage and antiquity. The guiding right of personal conviction can never be wholly free from the deviation due to man's mental refraction; and in a matter of such great importance as the attainment of the supreme good of life, faulty steps, though based on personal conviction, deserve to be very seriously deprecated.

After all, our salvation depends as much upon what we think as upon what we do. A man's conviction may often be wrong, as I have just now told you ; even then the sincerity of his conviction ought to be quite enough to acquit him of the guilt of having had any motive to do wrong. Nevertheless, a wrong deed does not cease to be wrong, simply because there has been no evil motive behind it. We know well enough how so very many men do wrong so very frequently with such very good intentions. Therefore the best guidance for conduct is to be found neither in reason alone nor in authority alone. On the other hand it has to be found in the harmonious blending of both reason and authority. That is why Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as an ideal teacher, quotes the authority of usage and antiquity, at the same time that He earnestly appeals to the reason of His sincerely anxious and earnest disciple.

Arjuna was accordingly commanded to learn that it was quite imperatively obligatory on his part to live the life of work, firstly because such life alone was logically consistent with his essential nature as an embodied soul, and secondly also because the life of work had behind it the authority of great antiquity and high and continued usage. An examination of how God lives the life of incessant and stupendous work, and is at the same time free from the binding thraldom of *karma*, should have enabled Arjuna to see, as indeed he was called upon to see, that the life of earnest work, when lived in accordance with the divine law of duty, is altogether incapable subjecting man to the bondage of *karma*. The law of duty does not only impose on man the obligation of living the life of work, but also specifies with authority the kind of work which it is obligatory on his part to do well in life as occasions arise. It was therefore that Arjuna was wrong in proposing to get away from the work of giving battle in the impending great war and to adopt the life of retirement and mendicant asceticism, although he certainly made such a proposal with very excellent intentions. And if we wish to live the life of 'work' well, so as to make it equivalent to the life of 'no-work' then we have to know the exact nature of the circumstances under which 'work' may be made to become equivalent to 'no-work'. How valuable this knowledge is, and how difficult it is to acquire it, are both pointed out in the next *ślōka* :—

किं कर्म किमकर्मेति कवयोऽप्यत्र मोहिताः ।
तत्ते कर्म प्रवक्ष्यामि यद्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसेऽशुभात् ॥ १६ ॥

16. In this respect of what 'work' is and what 'no-work' (is), even sages have been deluded. Therefore I shall teach you (what) 'work' (is), by knowing which you will become free from (all) evil.

You may remember my having once before drawn your attention to the fact that the aim of the *Bhagavadgītā* may well be taken to be the reconciliation of *pravṛitti* with *nivṛitti* in the matter of our conduct in life. To some it may seem to be naturally evident that human salvation does not depend so much upon what men and women do as upon what they are and what they think. Such people base *mōksha* on *jñāna* and maintain that it is the wisdom in the heart of the aspirant which is really responsible for his deliverance and salvation. But there are others to whom it may equally positively appear to be certain that life is essentially made up of work. According to these, mere wisdom in the heart, howsoever true and excellent it may be, cannot give rise to salvation. It is this kind of antithesis between work and wisdom, as suitable means for the attainment of the soul's salvation, that underlies the contrast between *pravṛitti-mārga* and *nivṛitti-mārga* in Hindu religion and ethics. The former of these is, as you know, the path of work and activity, while the latter is the path of retirement in which men are expected to turn away as far as possible from work and activity and achievement. Thus most men are apt to feel that, in their endeavour to seek and find salvation, they are called upon to choose either the life of action and achievement or the life of renunciation and retirement. Even great philosophers appear to have been subject to this sort of difference of opinion regarding the course of life which is best suited for the attainment of salvation. In most controversies like this, which are of a markedly long duration in history, it generally happens that both sides are partially right and neither side is in a position to show itself to be decidedly more in agreement with truth than the other. Therefore it is all the more difficult to make out well the true nature of the life of work or of the life of renunciation. This controversy regarding the question as to which of these two kinds of life

possesses superior moral and religious efficacy—whether it is the life of action and achievement or that of retirement and renunciation—is not peculiar to the religion of the Hindus. It is known to almost all the great religions of the world. Buddhism and Jainism know it quite as well as Hinduism does. The holy *fakirs* of Islam bear testimony to the approved currency of asceticism among the followers of the Prophet of Arabia. Christianity also has had its many monks and nuns; and Christian teachers are not unknown who have declared that Jesus was a holy ascetic, who preached prominently the life of renunciation and asceticism. I am of opinion that the *Bible* clearly supports the view that Jesus taught both *pravṛitti* and *nivṛitti*. Nevertheless, it is the *Vēdāntic* religion of the Hindus, which is often criticised by certain people as being the one religion which preaches passivity, inaction, silent contemplation and *yōgic* meditation, and thus unfits men to live the vigorous life of duty and achievement. These critics ask us further—'What is the good of such a religion in these trying days of strenuous struggle for existence and unceasing competition in life?' The truth is that the doctrine of renunciation is common to all the great religions of the world; it is one of the bed-rocks on which the edifice of the philosophy of conduct rests. And whether this doctrine is really helpful to human progress or not, is entirely dependent upon the way in which people understand it and act upon it. Arjuna misunderstood this momentous moral doctrine of renunciation, and thought that it necessarily implied retirement from the battle-field and a complete relief from the obligation of having to live the strenuous life of work and duty. That the great moral doctrine of renunciation does not mean this, but requires, and is fully compatible with, the life of work and duty, is what Śrī-Kṛishṇa endeavoured to teach clearly to Arjuna; and in some of the following *ślōkas* we are given an explanation of how it is that the life of work may itself be made to become the life of renunciation. When it is seen that the life of renunciation has itself to be necessarily based on the life of work, it cannot be contended with any semblance of truth that such renunciation is pure passivity and inaction. To know well what the appropriate life of work is, and what that of renunciation is, we have to understand how they differ from, and are at the same time related to, each other. Accordingly we find the teaching here proceed thus:—

कर्मणो ह्यपि बोद्धव्यं बोद्धव्यं च विकर्मणः ।
अकर्मणोऽपि बोद्धव्यं गहना कर्मणो गतिः ॥ १७ ॥

17. (The meaning) of 'work' has to be understood and (that) of 'mis-work' also has to be understood: (the meaning) of 'no-work' again has to be understood. (Indeed) the meaning of 'work' is (so) hard to be made out.

Here, as in the previous stanza, *work* represents the life of duty and active achievement, and *no-work* represents the life of renunciation and retirement. These are apparently contradictory, and are so only apparently. Nevertheless, most people are apt to look upon them as being really contradictory of each other. Thus both *work* and *no-work* are subject to be easily mis-understood; and often, in consequence, the true meaning of *work* becomes difficult to be made out correctly. To understand well the true meaning of *work*, we have to make out clearly not only the distinction between *work* and *no-work*, but also the other distinction between *work* and *mis-work*. It is evident that the expression *mis-work* means wrong work, that is, that kind of work which is either wrongly elected or wrongly performed. I have no doubt you remember well that, when we were studying the third chapter of the *Gītā*, we learnt that one's own duty, even if ill performed, is indeed better for one than another's duty, howsoever well performed. Or, as I have more than once put it to you before, duty is not indeterminate, and is therefore not left to the free choice of the doer. That work alone is one's duty for which one is fitted by nature. In other words, the duty of a man in life is invariably determined for him by the 'qualities' of his own *prakṛiti*; it is in fact determined by whichever of those 'qualities' happens to be dominant and by how much it is so dominant in his constitution. Any duty, when it is chosen in careless disregard of the disposition as well as the effect of the 'qualities' of one's nature, is certain to turn out to be a wrongly elected duty. It is thus in fact that wrongly elected work has always to be understood to be *mis-work*. One of the characteristic definitions of *yōga* or the life of earnest application to work, as we have it given to us in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, is—*yōgaḥ karmasu kauśalam*—that *yōga* is cleverness in

relation to the performance of works. It is, as you are aware, in calling upon Arjuna to adopt the life of application to duty, that Śrī-Kṛishṇa told him that *yōga* meant cleverness in relation to the performance of all those various kinds of work, which it may rightly be a man's duty in life to do. You know well by this time that the word *yōga* has many meanings in Sanskrit. But it is this definition of one of its many meanings which is of importance to us here. It must be evident to you all that, though a man chooses correctly such duty as is suited for him to adopt in life, still he may fail to perform that duty well, for the very sufficient reason that he has not the needed skill or ability for its appropriate performance. In a case like this also, the work that a man does is apt to become *mis-work*. To prevent *work* from becoming *mis-work*, one has firstly to choose one's duty appropriately, and secondly to do that duty well with ability and cleverness. Accordingly, it becomes evident that all that kind of activity and achievement, which is not *mis-work* in any manner, deserves to be called *work*. Putting it in another way, we may say that *work* means that kind of activity in life which is rightly chosen and well carried out. So far, we have been trying to understand the difference between *work* and *mis-work*. That *work* ought not to be *mis-work*, and that no *mis-work* can ever properly turn out to be *work*, are well worth knowing. But to understand the nature of *work* well and fully, we have to learn to distinguish it from *no-work* also. What is meant by अकर्म or *no-work* here is neither the absence of work nor any thing else which is the very opposite of work. We shall see presently that, under certain given conditions, *work* may become equivalent to *no-work* and *no-work* equivalent to *work*. This equivalence between them cannot be possible, if they really happen to be wholly incompatible with each other. Indeed what Śrī-Kṛishṇa has taught us in His philosophy of work is, that truly ethical *work*, to be properly such, has to possess notably the characteristics of *no-work*, and that *no-work*, so far as such a thing is possible at all, has to possess unmistakably the characteristics of *work*, if it is to prove helpful at all to self-realisation and salvation. In fact we have to understand by *work* and *no-work* here what we have so often taken to be the meanings of the Sanskrit words *pravṛitti* and *nivṛitti*. These may in a way be seen also to correspond to what, in European ethics, they call by the technical names of egoism and altrusim. You know

that *pravṛitti* represents the energetic life of active achievement and acquisition, while *nivṛitti* represents the calm life of renunciation and retirement. There is no philosophy of ethics, which, being based on religion, does not urge as a matter of necessity the adoption of both *pravṛitti* and *nivṛitti* at the same time in the ideal conduct of human life. Absolute *nivṛitti* is both impossible and undesirable: and *pravṛitti*, as unqualified by *nivṛitti*, is also equally undesirable, if not more. Hence arises the need for the due combination of *pravṛitti* and *nivṛitti*, that is, of 'work' and 'no-work', in life. We are accordingly told—

कर्मण्यकर्म यः पश्येदकर्मणि च कर्म यः ।
स बुद्धिमान् मनुष्येषु स युक्तः कृत्स्नकर्मकृत् ॥ १८ ॥

18. He, who sees 'no-work' in 'work' and 'work' in 'no-work',—(he), among (all) men, is possessed of intelligence; he is the appropriate doer of all 'work.'

If, as we have learnt, all great religions enjoin the life of work and duty as well as the life of retirement and renunciation, what is particularly pointed out here is that the life of work is not incompatible with or antagonistic to the life of renunciation. Indeed, it reads like a riddle when we are called upon to see 'work' in 'no-work' and 'no-work' in 'work'; and it really requires intelligence to be able to solve the riddle. The statement, that he, who succeeds in solving this riddle, is the man of intelligence among all men, means clearly that he is in possession of the true secret of what constitutes the life of wisdom as opposed to the ordinary life of selfish action. I need not remind you here that it is the life of retirement and renunciation —that which we call the life of *nivṛitti* in Sanskrit—which is commonly conceived to be the life fit to be lived by the unworldly philosopher with his well-established spiritual wisdom. We are further told here that he, who really succeeds in solving the interesting problem of seeing 'work' in 'no-work' as well as of 'no-work' in 'work', happens to be the appropriate doer of all work. In other words, it is only such a man that can live the life of duty aright. Accordingly, it is in the life of him, who realises 'work' in 'no-work' and 'no-work' in 'work', that we have the harmonisation of work and wisdom, of achievement and

renunciation. You may remember how a king Janaka of Vidēha has been already referred to, as a person who was in his days highly famous for effectively combining in himself the true spirit of *nivṛitti* with an appropriate life of *pravṛitti*. He found 'no-work' in 'work'. In the same context where this Janka is referred to in the *Gītā*, we are given to understand that he was not the only person of the kind known to Indian antiquity, but that there were others also, who, like him, saw easily 'no-work' in 'work'. In fact, all those active and unselfish benefactors of mankind, who, living in the world much like ordinary men of the world, have, nevertheless, through their love and their selflessness and sacrifice, rendered markedly valuable and active aid to humanity and to civilisation, are, irrespective of their race and creed and nationality, worthy examples to illustrate the general possibility of seeing 'no-work' in 'work'. Similarly history affords more than one illustrious example to show to us the other possibility of seeing 'work' in 'no-work'. Kapila, Mahāvīra, Buddha, Śaṅkara, Rāmānuja, and Madhva are a few among the honoured names of Indian history which come to my mind just now in this connection. All these adopted the life of asceticism and renunciation as befitting them best; and yet they spent themselves in doing good, that is, in thinking out and working for the welfare of others. This is how they saw 'work' in 'no-work', and exemplified in their own lives the true meaning and the inner purpose of the real life of renunciation. Accordingly, we have to make out that the ascetic philosopher's life of renunciation and the active worker's life of action are both fit to be hallowed equally well by the chastening power of selfless service. The benignant light of the service of man makes the life of duty bright and joyous; and in the vividity of that light the apparent contradiction between 'work' and 'no-work' disappears altogether. The question as to who should adopt the life of 'no-work' so as to see 'work' in it, and who else should adopt the life of 'work' so as to see 'no-work' in it, is of course determined aright by the inherently constitutional qualities of individuals. But whichever life it is, that an individual adopts in accordance with his own natural fitness, it is impossible for him to ignore the obligatoriness of selfless service therein, so long as he wishes to obtain the salvation soul-emancipation. Therefore the truly wise man is described in the following stanza thus:—

यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसङ्कल्पवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥ १९ ॥

19. (He), whose activities are all unassociated with the volition (that is impelled) by desire,—him, the wise men speak of as the sage, whose *karma* has been consumed in the fire of wisdom.

Let us try to imagine a man whose mind is capable of being free from the volition which is impelled by desire. You know how we have all to will before we act; it is the volition in the mind that determines the action of the body. And this volition is, in its turn, determined generally by the desire which from time to time prevails in the heart. Accordingly, the desire in the heart gives direction to the will, which in its turn stimulates and sustains the activities of the body—I only mean all such activities as are entirely voluntary. That is the reason why, when we try to judge men from their actions, we are often led to go behind those actions and to draw inferences as to their underlying motives. You know, I believe, that, in doing this, some selfish desire or other is very generally taken to be at the basis of the motive to act. In the large majority of instances, the logic that is involved in this process of reasoning holds good. But there are also certain cases of an exceptional character, wherein this common logic fails very badly. This failure in such cases is due to the fact that the very rarity of the men, who act with disinterested motives, leads most people to the dismal conclusion that disinterested action is altogether unnatural and impossible. The desire to acquire pleasure and to avoid pain need not, and in some cases does not, determine the motive to act; and it is, as you already know, Śrī-Kṛishṇa's opinion that disinterested action is perfectly possible and not at all unnatural. Unless we succeed in killing our unethical and unspiritual tendency to be selfish, we cannot become competent to live the wholesome life of selfless work and achievement: and fortunately for us, we have aids to kill this tendency to be selfish. The wisdom arising out of philosophic self-realisation is one of such aids. Strong faith in God, which is associated with deep devotion and love and self-surrender to Him, is another very valuable aid in enabling us to kill our tendency to be

selfish. An imperturbable sense of duty and of high moral responsibility may also help us in overcoming our common human weakness of acting invariably with only such self-regarding motives as are based on desire due to love of pleasure. In whatever way a man succeeds in subduing his tendency to be selfish, he obtains, as the reward of his success, full freedom from the bondage of *karma*. He no longer feels thereafter—'I want this, or I don't want that'. Nevertheless, his will is in operation and makes him work; and the work which he thus does disinterestedly cannot cause his soul to become imprisoned again and again in a succession of physical embodiments. A life of such work not only creates no new *karma* to prevent the final release of his soul from its imprisonment in matter, but also destroys all the stored up *karma* due to his past conditions of re-incarnation. यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि स्थिताः। अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥ This is, as I believe you already know, the *Upanishadic* teaching on the point; and according to it the mortal man becomes immortal and attains the *Brahman* even here, as soon as all the desires in his heart are completely removed and overthrown: that is, as soon as his life turns out to be altogether one of disinterested duty well performed with cleverness and with ability. It is in this manner that his *karma* becomes burnt up and consumed in the fire of wisdom. Please note that his wisdom consists mainly in his practical realisation that work in itself is incapable of giving rise to what we have called bondage-compelling *karma*, and that what makes work give rise to such *karma* is in fact the selfishness of the motive leading to its performance. Whoever in whatsoever manner succeeds in getting rid of selfishness altogether, he is indeed a wise man; and his wisdom certainly deserves to be appreciated by the wise. There is a Sanskrit adage which says that it is only the learned who can well appreciate the true worth of the learned. Similarly it is only the selfless sage who knows how to appreciate the wisdom of unselfishness. To be known as a wise person to the selfless sage is therefore nothing less than to possess that wisdom, which burns up like fire all accumulated *karma* and thereby makes the way easy for the attainment of the salvation of soul-emancipation. Accordingly, what makes 'work' the same as 'no-work', in the matter of the non-production of the bondage of *karma*, is surely the freedom of the worker from all selfish motives that are actuated by desire. Hence the next *ślōka* emphatically declares that,

in the case of the worker, who is thus absolutely unselfish, even the most strenuously and enthusiastically performed work cannot in the least tend to make his soul become subject to the bondage of *karma*. And it runs thus:—

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासङ्गं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किञ्चित् करोति सः ॥ २० ॥

20. Having given up in entirety the attachment to the results of work, being ever satisfied and depending upon nothing, even though (a person is) ardently engaged in (the performance of) work, he surely does nothing at all.

The question, that is dealt with in the stanza just translated, is again evidently in relation to how 'work' may really be made to become altogether equivalent to 'no-work'. We have already been told that, by abandoning all selfish motives, a worker may effectively convert his 'work' into 'no-work'. But it has to be borne in mind that this 'no-work' is not the same thing as absolutely passive and inert inaction, in as much as it has really active work performed under a certain condition for its equivalent. That condition is the worker's freedom from all selfish desires in relation to the fruits of his work. That worker, who does not at all feel that all such desirable fruits as may arise out of his own work, should naturally and necessarily belong to himself, and that he alone is therefore entitled to enjoy them,—that is the sort of person in relation to whom even active ardent 'work' can become equivalent to 'no-work'. That such a person is quite certain to be ever satisfied, goes without saying. None need prove to you that the least selfish man is very naturally the most contented man. This very contentment of his is certain to make it impossible for him to feel at any time that, without this thing or that thing to own and to enjoy, he cannot at all get on and be happy. Indeed in relation to him there cannot be any object of attainment on which his sense of happiness inevitably depends. In other words, there can surely be no object the non-attainment whereof will tend to mar or to undo his life. He is therefore depending upon nothing. But this contentment and internal freedom do not in his case act as

preventives of work and achievement. The common idea, that contentment cripples action and enterprise, does not hold true in his case; for even the avoidance of the troubles and trials connected with the energetic life of action and achievement is not to him an object to be seriously striven for and attained. On the other hand, he is led to look upon life as a field for service, wherein his own true function is to do his duty properly and irrespective of all consequences to himself. Can *karma* cling to such a man? We know very well, from all that we have learnt so far, that it certainly cannot. Accordingly, though ardently engaged in work, he in truth does nothing at all. That is, in spite of his own ardent employment in work, *karma* clings as little to him as if he really did no work at all. It is thus that 'work' is made in his case to become equivalent to 'no-work'.

How 'no-work' can become equivalent to 'work' is pointed out in the next two stanzas as I understand them. Let us now proceed to study them.

निराशीर्यतचित्तात्मा त्यक्तसर्वपरिग्रहः ।
शारीरं केवलं कर्म कुर्वन् नाप्नोति किल्बिषम् ॥ २१ ॥
यदृच्छालाभसन्तुष्टो द्वन्द्वातीतो विमत्सरः ।
समः सिद्धावसिद्धौ च कृत्वापि न निबध्यते ॥ २२ ॥

21. He, who is devoid of desires and has under control (his) mind and soul, and has given up all (idea of) property, (he) incurs no sin by performing merely such work as is required for (the upkeep of) the body.

22. Being satisfied with such advantages as come of themselves, and having risen above the pairs of opposites, he, who is free from envy and looks alike upon success and failure,—(he) is not bound down (by *karma*), even though (he) has done work.

To understand well the import of these stanzas, we have to bear in mind what we have been already told in regard to the utter impossibility of living the life of absolute inaction. As you know, the very qualities of *prakṛiti* compel an embodied being to live the life

of work. Hence the life of no-work is unnatural, and cannot literally be lived by any one. Then how is the wise man to see 'work' in 'no-work'? For this purpose, what we have to do is to take into consideration only that minimum amount of work without which no embodied being can manage to live at all. It is this minimum work which is understood by the expression *kēvala-śārīra-karman* here; it means merely so much work as is inevitably required for the upkeep of the body. We have also learnt before this that physical inaction in itself cannot prevent one from becoming subject to the bondage of *karma*. Indeed, the mere burning in the mind is, as you have been taught, quite as harmful as active participation in the lustful pursuit of pleasure, in so far as the imposition of the bondage of *karma* on the soul is concerned. A highly inactive man may thus tend to become helplessly fettered down by *karma*. In the case of such a man it cannot be rightly said that he incurs no sin. Consequently his life of no-work—as far as that is really possible—cannot be considered to be equivalent to the appropriate life of work, and he cannot illustrate how 'work' may be seen in 'no-work'. On the other hand, the man, in whose life we may see the equivalence of 'no-work' to 'work', is he, who combines, with the inevitable minimum of work required by nature, that proper and wholesome attitude of mind, which is altogether free from cupidity of all sorts and is ever well under wise control. Hence we have to understand this inevitable minimum of work as constituting the 'no-work' which is contemplated in the context; for that is indeed the only kind of 'no-work' which is at all possible here for man. That the performance of merely such and so much work, as is required for the upkeep of the body and its healthy vitality, does not give rise to sin, cannot be interpreted to mean that the performance of any other or more work, than that, does give rise to sin. Śrī-Kṛishṇa, who has enjoined on all persons the life of duty and of service as highly obligatory, and has interpreted *yōga* to mean among other things cleverness in the carrying out of work, cannot with consistency teach that anything more than the inevitable minimum of work in life is calculated to give rise to sin. To understand clearly the position taken up in these two stanzas, we have to see that the ethics of conduct as taught in the *Gītā* has really two aspects. One of these is purely external and relates to work. The other is wholly internal and takes account

of the selflessness or otherwise of the motive with which the worker does his work. The combined result of the teaching, as comprising both these aspects, is that appropriate work done well in the appropriate spirit of unselfishness can never give rise to sin. Where the requisite unselfishness is at its maximum, there evidently it does not matter very much whether the external work is or is not more than the inevitable minimum. Of course we have to make sure that the character as well as the quantity of the work done, even under this trying condition of maximum unselfishness, is in keeping with the nature and the capacity of the worker. Given this maximum unselfishness, the inevitable minimum of work is as good and worthy in the case of the man that is fitted only for it, as any larger amount of work would be in the case of another man who is by nature fitted for that same larger amount. Accordingly, the unselfish man, who does only a very small amount of work, does not incur any sin on account of the work, which he does, being very small in amount. I hope it has now become clear to you how it is that the wise man may well see 'work' in 'no-work'.

You have, however, already made out that it becomes possible for the wise man to realise the equivalence of 'no-work' with 'work', only when the spirit of the worker is characterised by what I have called the maximum of unselfishness. This domination of unselfishness in the heart of the worker is, as you know well, necessary even in relation to that other person in whom the wise man may observe 'work' made equivalent to 'no-work'. It is in association with the idea of the equivalence of 'no-work' with 'work', that we have here, in the second of the two stanzas under consideration, a description of the characteristics of the person whose spirit may rightly be understood to be dominated by that maximum amount of unselfishness to which I have just been drawing your attention. An old objection against the life of unselfishness as taught in the *Gītā* may be urged here again; and it may accordingly be said that such unselfish life is as impossible as it is unwholesome. Selfishness is, as one may well point out, so ingrained in human nature, that it happens to be the most powerful incentive for men to engage themselves in hard and strenuous work. There can be no doubt that this is only too true as societies and civilisations are ordinarily constituted. But it is a

very different constitution of society, which these stanzas here, dealing with the equivalence between ' work ' and ' no-work ', have in view. In the ideal constitution of society contemplated here, people have to work and to live the life of strenuous labour altogether without the incentive of selfishness. It cannot surely be said rightly that such a thing as this is not at all possible ; because, some of the greatest persons, who are justly famous in history, have amply demonstrated the full possibility of living a life of useful and unceasing labour and achievement without the stimulative influence of the morally poisonous feeling of selfishness. As a matter of fact, their very greatness may very well be looked upon as being at once both the cause and the consequence of this strikingly effective combination of arduous work with unselfish aims in their lives. Moreover, one does not quite clearly see why such a combination of work with unselfishness should at all be impossible. If we grant that it is not impossible, there can certainly be no question as to its being desirable ; and in a society, which markedly manifests this combination, neither the interest of individuals as individuals, nor even the interest of society as a whole, is apt to be injuriously affected thereby. Imagine a society, in which every member is an ideal person of this kind, in whom we may see both ' work ' and ' no-work' in their full completeness and wholly harmonious combination. Every member in such a society is certain to work and to produce valuable results with the same zeal and devotion and earnestness as characterise the most prominently selfish workers in the commonly current egoistic regime of human civilisation. Consequently the result turned out by the work of the society, which is so organised on the basis of unselfishness, cannot be less than or inferior to the result turned out by another society of the same strength and the same capacity, which is organised on the basis of selfishness as controlled by selfishness. The harvest reaped by the former society has to be necessarily quite as abundant as the harvest reaped by the latter society. Now what becomes of the harvest which the unselfishly organised society reaps? The fruit of the labour of each member of such a society comes to be owned by all the members thereof ; and from what belongs to all of them collectively each obtains what he wants according to his natural needs. A society like this will not surely die of starvation. In it men and women will indirectly enrich

themselves by enriching the society as a whole. They have also the advantage of being morally superior owing to their unselfishness, and thus happen to deserve well the salvation of soul-emancipation. From the stand-point of material advantages, this ideal society is accordingly not inferior to the ordinarily organised selfish society; it is, on the other hand, morally very decidedly superior because of its freedom from the sinful taint of soul-imprisoning selfishness.

If we keep the value of this social ideal steadily in view, we may quite easily understand what is meant by यदृच्छालाभसंतुष्टः here. To be satisfied with such advantages, as come of themselves, does not here mean anything like the iniquitous and solthful contentment of the drone, who does not himself toil but grows fat shamelessly on the produce of the toil of others. The idea implied here is that, in the ideal society organised on the basis of unselfishness, the unselfishly working members thereof are not apt to be left in the cold, but that their wants also will receive due attention so as to be always satisfactorily supplied. Advantages of all sorts are thus certain to come to them also; and since they are unselfish in their aims and aspirations, they are sure to feel contented with whatever advantages so come to them of themselves. It is not easy to be able to command this kind of worthy contentment and unselfishness. Psychologically considered, the power to command contentment and unselfishness presupposes that the fortunate person, who has this power, is *dvandvātīta*, and has accordingly risen above the power of the pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, pain and pleasure, desire and aversion, and so on. For one to rise above such pairs of opposites is, as you know, to cease absolutely to be a slave of the senses, so that neither pleasure has the alluring power to attract nor pain the abhorrent power to repel one any longer. When a man has thus broken through the bondage of the captivating allurements of the senses, it is no wonder that he easily manages to be satisfied with merely such advantages as may come to him of themselves. And then how can envy find any room in his heart? The truly contented man cannot be either ambitious or envious; and the man who is truly neither ambitious nor envious cannot but be well contented. Such certainly is the mutual relation between true contentment and freedom from envy. Envy is after all nothing more than that sense of disappointment,

which certain morally weak persons feel on observing that others have in any matter got on or prospered better than themselves. This unworthy feeling is evidently incompatible with contentment and mental peace. Since the contented man of this kind, who has risen above the disturbance of the pairs of opposites, and is calm and satisfied with whatever advantages come to him naturally of themselves, cannot do any of his duties in life with motives of personal gain or self-aggrandisement, it is indeed more to him to have the opportunity to perform a worthy duty than even to succeed in it, so as to reap for himself the advantages that may accrue from such success. It is only thus that such a typically unselfish performer of duty can really look alike upon success and upon failure. This required equanimity in relation to success and failure does not mean that our ideal performer of duty is at liberty to do with indifference whatever duty he may have to do in life. You know that cleverness in the performance of works has been called *yōga*, and you know further that all such work, as is wrongly chosen and adopted, or is badly performed owing to indifference or want of skill on the part of the worker, deserves to be brought under *vikarma* or 'mis-work'. You must therefore see that that equanimity, which is contemplated here, gives no sanction of any kind whatever to the indifferent performance of work. Indifference in relation to success and failure does not surely refer here to the success and failure of the duty in itself, but refers on the other hand to that other sort of success and failure which is ordinarily determined by the accrual or the non-accrual of the expected results of the work to the worker. This variety of indifference is not merely justifiable, but is even held to be highly desirable. It is in fact one of the necessarily associated conditions of that maximum amount of unselfishness, which has now been seen to be quite fully capable of making 'work' equivalent to 'no-work', and 'no-work' also equivalent to 'work'.

We have so far tried to understand well the complete significance of 'work' as explained in the *Bhagavadgītā*. I have no doubt that you will all agree with me now in holding that it is very true to say—*gahanā karmaṇō gatiḥ*—that the meaning of 'work' is hard to understand. To be able to understand well the meaning of 'work', we have had to understand the meaning of 'mis-work' and 'no-work'

also; for, as you now know, it would have been impossible for us to make out otherwise how 'work', which ordinarily forges for man the hard bondage of *karma*, happens also to be the very means by which that same bondage has to be broken through by all those who really aim at the salvation of soul-emancipation. Our comprehension of the ideas, underlying 'work', 'no-work', and 'mis-work', has enabled us to see clearly that 'work' and 'no-work' can be really made to be equivalent to each other, and that what makes 'work' itself serve as the means of liberating the soul from the bondage of *karma* is the realisation in life of this possible ethical equivalence between 'work' and 'no-work'. Naturally the next question to be taken up for consideration is that of the means whereby people may achieve this highly important practical realisation in their own lives. We shall take that up for study in our next class.

xxii

In our last class we were dealing with the true meaning of work in the light of the ethics of the *Vēdānta* as expounded in the *Bhagavadgītā*. We then learnt once again that the life of absolute *akarma* or 'no-work' is utterly impossible, and that neither *karma* ('work') nor *akarma* ('no-work') can cause the soul to become subject to the bondage of matter, so long as we are able to make sure that we are not in any way engaged in the performance of *vikarma* or 'mis-work'. In the absence of *vikarma*, both *karma* and *akarma* are helpful to all aspirants after salvation, provided their adoption of *karma* or *akarma* is appropriately carried out. Thus, as means of salvation, 'work' and 'no-work' have been shown to be equivalent to each other; and it was seen further that this equivalence between them is dependent upon the integrity of the unselfishness of the worker. To-day we have to deal with how an aspirant may well manage to command that kind of unselfishness, without which no worker can ever make 'work' and 'no-work' become equivalent to each other in his own life. The acquisition of the power to live the life of unselfish duty is, as human experience so abundantly shows, very far from easy. Nevertheless, that same human experience shows also that it cannot be altogether impossible to acquire that power. The *Gītā* does not maintain that selfishness alone has to be the motive

power behind human action, although it recognizes clearly enough that selfishness does only too often act as a very potent incentive for human work and achievement. To maintain the energy and forcefulness of work, and to enhance at the same time its fruitfulness, are ever very necessary in the interest of human welfare and advancing civilization. But, according to Śrī-Kṛishṇa, these things have to be achieved without the aid of the stimulus of selfishness. Such energy and fruitfulness of work, as are to any considerable degree dependent upon human selfishness, cannot surely tend to promote the highest interest of man. They cannot make him progress morally or spiritually in any marked manner, and cannot make his civilization more and more effective as a means for the fulfilment of the God-appointed purpose of universal creation. Therefore selfishness cannot and ought not to be tolerated as the ideal basis of human motive and action. Something else, which is really more wholesome and more helpful for true progress, has to be found out and made to serve as the ideal basis of man's motive for action. We have been already told that *yajña*, sacrificial worship, is capable of proving such a worthy basis of human motive, and should therefore be encouraged to occupy its fundamental position in the moral and spiritual upbuilding of our lives. You may probably remember that we bestowed some time and thought on the teaching—यज्ञार्थात् कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धनः—that people in the world are apt to become generally subject to the bondage of *karma*, except in so far as they do work which is intended to subserve the ends of a sacrifice. We then learnt that a sacrifice, conducted as an act of divine worship, is well able to lift a man from the ordinary level of the selfish worker to that of the unselfish performer of duty. Divine worship may indeed be conducted in many ways; and in whatsoever manner conducted, it acts as an effective instrument in gradually elevating man morally from what may be considered to be the plane of unadulterated egoism to that of a pure and high altruism. We may all observe how easily, in more than one aspect of life, final disinterestedness arises out of original interestedness; indeed the religious discipline of human life is particularly well suited to enable men and women to undergo that excellent and always needed moral training which evokes unselfishness out of selfishness. We cannot afford to forget these ideas in relation to *yajña*, when studying some of the following

ślōkas. With this preamble, so to say, please let me begin our work for to-day.

गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः ।
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते ॥ २३ ॥

23. In the case of him, whose attachments are gone, and who is (thus) emancipated and has made his mind rest well in (philosophic) wisdom, and conducts his life so as (thereby) to fulfil a sacrifice,—(in his case) the whole of his *karma* is destroyed.

I am sure you have not failed to notice that I have retained the Sanskrit word *karma* in the English translation of the *ślōka* which I have just read. It does not appear to me to be right to translate that word here by *work* or *action* or any other English word of a more or less similar import. I am inclined to understand by that word in this context what is generally expressed by the compound word *karma-vāsanā* in Sanskrit. It means the internal impress in the form of *puṇya* or *pāpa*, which every kind of work that is done in life is apt to leave behind, so as thereby to subject the soul to the recurring necessity of having to undergo reincarnation. It is in fact through such impressed influence that the bondage of *karma* is understood to be created. The stanza in the third chapter, to which I have already directed your attention, tells us what the exact nature of the circumstance is under which work may not at all give rise to the harmful bondage of *karma.* It tells us that all other work, than what is really performed in fulfilment of a sacrifice, makes the worker become subject to the bondage of *karma,* thereby giving us to understand clearly that such work as is actually performed in fulfilment of a sacrifice is altogether incapable of giving rise to that bondage. And the stanza, with which we are now dealing, tells us further that all such work, as is done in fulfilment of a sacrifice, destroys completely the worker's subjection to the bondage of *karma.* Because human beings have inevitably and always to live the life of incessant work,

it is through the life of work alone that men have to win the salvation of their souls. This evidently means that work, which is generally the creator of the bondage of *karma*, has also in itself the power of destroying that bondage. Indeed it is that life of work, the activity whereof is all spent in the due performance of disinterested duty, which proves conclusively both the preventive and the curative efficacy of work in relation to the common spiritual ailment of man spoken of as his bondage of *karma*. A well known *ślōka* in the third chapter of the *Gītā* (III. 9.) has the preventive efficacy of work in view; the one we are now studying deals with its curative efficacy. To prevent the creation of the bondage-of-*karma* ailment as well as to cure it completely, it is necessary that all work in life should be done in fulfilment of a sacrifice, that is, with the singular aim of serving and worshipping God thereby. Who then may well be the man to whom work becomes worship thus? According to what we are told here, it is the man, whose attachments are all gone, and who is therefore emancipated and has his mind firmly fixed in true wisdom—it is he to whom the work of life becomes the worship of God. It must be quite self-evident to you all that freedom from attachments gives rise to the emancipation of the soul from its slavery to the senses. In some cases, however, it may so happen sometimes that freedom from the slavery to the senses tends to give rise to a deadening of sensibility, so as thereby to make mere misanthropes of many men and women. But the emancipated person here thought of is such an one as has his or her mind firmly established in true wisdom; and the truly wise mind can give no room for either apathy or misanthropy. The unselfish man, who is possessed of this kind of wisdom, is very rightly expected to live the life of steady work and loving service; and in living such a life he is certain to feel convinced that he is thereby earnestly obeying the behests of God and worshipping Him in the most appropriate manner possible. To love and to serve man is, as some say, even more than to obey God; it is to be a humble fellow-worker with God Himself, and in that capacity to honour and to worship Him even as He expects and deserves to be honoured and worshipped by all wise persons. Accordingly, it is to the unattached and emancipated man of wisdom that work becomes worship. So, at any rate, we are told here. I remember to have told you more than once already that the life, the activities whereof are all directed

towards the conduct of sacrificial or other forms of religious worship, is destined to have its fruition in the attainment of unselfishness and illumined and emancipated spirituality. This is true also. Unselfishness and philosophic wisdom can very well transmute the common every-day-work of life into divine worship. Similary the life, that is mainly devoted to the conduct of sacrificial or other forms of divine worship, may become in due course well infilled with unselfishness and with the love and wisdom which are characteristic of the saintly philosopher and man of God. Thus there can be no doubt about the great value of the life of worship as a means suited to bring about the destruction of the bondage of *karma*. But you should not miss to see clearly that the life of worship, which leads people on to true wisdom, cannot in all respects be the same as that other life of worship, which naturally follows in the wake of true wisdom. In fact the life of worship may be of various kinds, as we shall learn presently. The exact nature of every particular form of the life of worship is determined by the character and amount of the spiritual development of the person who adopts that form of life. You will soon learn how Śrī-Kṛishṇa has classified all such persons as are devoted to God and worship God with earnestness and sincerity under four heads, consisting, in order, of those who are in affliction, those who seek knowledge, those who desire wealth, and lastly those who are so full of philosophic wisdom as to have become divine seers themselves. The life of worship, which is lived by these different kinds of persons, cannot of course be all of the same character. In the case of the persons belonging to the first three of these classes, it must be easy to see that their life of worship is markedly actuated by desire in some form or other. That life is, nevertheless, capable of offering encouragement to the growth in them of truly unselfish wisdom and disinterested devotion to duty. But in the case of the persons, who belong to the last class, it is their established wisdom that impels them to look upon work as worship and to be ever actively devoted to duty. Obviously it is persons of this last class that are referred to in the *ślōka* now under consideration. Why it is really necessary that the man, who, being well established in true wisdom, looks upon all work as worship and lives the life of active duty,—why it is necessary that such a man cannot but be wholly free from the bondage of *karma* is pointed out in the next *ślōka*.

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्महविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥ २४ ॥

24. The offering (is made) to the *Brahman;* the oblation (is) the *Brahman;* with the *Brahman* (as the sacrificial instrument), it is offered (to be burnt up) in the fire of *Brahman.* By him, who has (thus) concentrated his devoted attention on *Brahman-work*, the *Brahman* Himself has to be reached.

To understand this *ślōka* well we have to bear in mind certain details regarding fire-sacrifices, which in fact represent the most prevalent form of *Vēdic* worship. In a typical fire-sacrifice we have the oblation to be offered, the instrument with which it is offered, the fire into which it is offered, and lastly the process of offering the oblation. All these necessary elements of a fire-sacrifice are here conceived to consist of nothing other than the *Brahman.* Hence a sacrifice of this description is well entitled to be called 'Brahman-work'. The sacrificer, that concentrates the whole of his devoted attention on the proper conduct of this sort of 'Brahman-work',—indeed, who may he be? Imagine a man, whose mind is truly established in the wisdom of the sages and seers and saints, and who therefore performs all his duties in life under the belief that in so doing he is simply carrying out the will of God. In the case of such a man, will not his whole life be a kind of religious sacrifice? To him work becomes worship as a matter of course; and in his case *Brahman* happens to be both the means and the end in respect of the attainment of the bliss of soul-salvation. The well realised wisdom of this worshipful worker in life makes him see God everywhere and in everything. Hence God-attainment alone becomes his truly natural goal. We may in this connection take into our consideration the *yathākratu-nyāya*, regarding which I remember having spoken to you once before as the rule, in accordance with which the reward that one reaps from worship has ever to be in keeping with the kind of worship that one offers. The central idea in this rule may be taken to be merely this, namely, that comparatively low aims in relation to worship give rise to comparatively low fulfilments, and high aims to high fulfilments. None can say, with any semblance of justice, that such a dependence of the fulfilment upon the aim is in any manner

wrong or inappropriate. Accordingly, he, who aims at the *Brahman* in all that he thinks and says and does,—he surely may attain the *Brahman* as his final goal. The *Pūrva-mīmāmsā* tells us that every sacrifice has its *phala* or result, *Svarga*, that is, the world of celestial enjoyments, being, for instance, declared to be the result of the performance of the *Jyōtishṭōma* sacrifice. The attainment of *Svarga* is here the expected result; and that is brought about through the *adṛishṭa* or the peculiar invisible religious influence to which the due performance of the sacrifice is conceived to give rise. Similarly, in the case of this other sacrifice, which is specially characterised here as *Brahman-work*, the object aimed at is evidently the *Brahman*; and hence the result attained is also the *Brahman*. It must be easy now to see how the *karma* or work, which is duly performed in keeping with these conditions, cannot assuredly give rise to the bondage of the soul—that is, to that distressing bondage which shuts it off from the bliss of final freedom and God-attainment. To attain the *Brahman* is possible, as you know, only to him who has succeeded in destroying the bondage of *karma*; and he, to whom work has become worship, and who therefore lives his life of duty with absolute non-attachment,—he can easily destroy the whole of his bondage-compelling *karma-vāsanā*. It is thus that he, who conducts his life as though he is thereby fulfilling a religious sacrifice, manages to have the whole of his clinging *karma* destroyed. All worshippers, however, are not alike; nor are all the sacrifices they perform seen to be alike. Nevertheless, it is true that only such work gives rise to the bondage of *karma*, as is not intended for the carrying out of a sacrifice; and all work, which is done in the true spirit of worship, can destroy the bondage of *karma* completely. Accordingly, it is but proper that other forms of worship, than the 'Brahman-work' described in this stanza, should also be taken into consideration here. Hence we are told—

दैवमेवापरे यज्ञं योगिनः पर्युपासते ।
ब्रह्माग्नावपरे यज्ञं यज्ञेनैवोपजुह्वति ॥ २५ ॥

25. Others, who are (also) devoted to duty, perform such a sacrifice as is intended for the propitiation of) the gods. Others (again) offer the sacrifice

into the fire of *Brahman* in the manner of the sacrifice itself.

Evidently there are two kinds of sacrifices mentioned in this *ślōka;* and both these are considered to be different from that other kind of sacrifice which has already been denoted by the name of *Brahma-karma* or 'Brahman-work'. I am sure you will all see at once that the former of the two kinds of sacrifices mentioned here is intended to be representative of the typical *śrauta* sacrifice, as it is critically expounded in the *Pūrva-mīmāmsā.* Sacrifices of this kind are generally intended to propitiate Indra and the other *Vēdic* gods, and invariably aim at the acquisition of certain desired objects, such as wealth, prosperity, power, progeny and so on. It is worthy of note that these sacrifices also are said here to be performed by *yōgins;* by this we have to understand that even those who perform them are really devoted to duty and religion. We are thus clearly led to see that even the ritualistic religion of *Vēdic* sacrifices must have been held in due respect by Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as a religion that is well capable of raising the worshipper, who fitly adopts it, from a lower to a comparatively higher state of moral advancement and spiritual realisation. The other kind of sacrifice mentioned in this *ślōka* is somewhat, but not altogether, different from the ordinary *śrauta* sacrifice. It is the same kind of sacrifice performed almost in the same manner, with but this peculiarity, namely, that the whole of the sacrifice is here conceived to be offered into the fire of *Brahman* instead of into the sanctified physical fire. I understand, by this offering of the sacrifice itself into the *Brahman,* that the sacrifice is intended neither to propitiate Indra and the other *Vēdic* gods, nor to bring to the sacrificer, as its result, wealth or power or progeny or any of those objects of desire which are commonly sought as the fruit of the performance of sacrifices. The sacrifice, which is offered in the fire of *Brahman,* is obviously intended to worship the *Brahman,* although Indra and the other Dēvas or gods are as usual invoked to partake of it. Here the worship of the *Vēdic* gods is conceived to be either equivalent to or to culminate in the worship of the *Brahman,* who is the Supreme Being of the *Vēdānta.* I believe some of you repeat after your morning and evening prayers daily this Sanskrit stanza:—

आकाशात् पतितं तोयं यथा गच्छति सागरम् ।
सर्वदेवनमस्कारः केशवं प्रति गच्छति ॥

The meaning of it is that, in the same manner in which all the water that falls down as rain from the sky goes ultimately to the sea, the pious bow of worship offered unto every one of the gods goes ultimately to Vishṇu. To conceive in this manner all the *Vēdic* gods as being comprised in the Supreme Being—the *Brahman*—is a well-known *Upanishadic* idea. So in this sacrifice, which is, as a duly formal sacrifice, offered into the fire of the *Brahman*, this Supreme Being of the *Vēdānta* is worshipped through Indra and the other *Vēdic* gods. Even such a worship of the Supreme Being, through this sort of mediate and approved instrumentality of the *Vēdic* gods, cannot but show to us that in it there really is a higher form of the payment of man's homage to God, although the older and less enlightened ritual and its ceremonial procedure are both strictly adhered to therein. The superiority of this peculiar form of worship consists not only in the deity ultimately aimed at being the *Brahman*, but also in the motive of the worship being thereby changed from interest to duty. The practice of the old ritual with a new motive and in a new form is not certainly confined to the religion of the Hindus only. It may well be observed in connection with almost every great religion that has had a sufficiently long history to have passed through all the great stages of a natural and progressive advancement. To give a new meaning to an old institution, so as to make it fulfil a new function, has in fact been one of the commonest means adopted by man in achieving the progress of civilisation in almost all its aspects. It is easy to see that, in so far as religion is concerned, such a course has been followed, for example, by Judaism, Christianity and Mahommedanism as much as by Hinduism. In the case of our *Vēdāntic* progress, the *Taittirīyōpanishad*, for instance, makes it very clear that, in passing from the old stage of *Vēdic* ritualism to the new one of *Vēdāntic* self-realisation and God-realisation, old sacrificial ideas and institutions themselves could be utilised to teach the new purpose. The main reason for adopting such a course in achieving progress in religion seems to be the maintenance of the continuity of the scriptural authority on which all revealed religions have

ultimately to take their stand. Hence the *daiva* sacrifice mentioned in this *ślōka* is the sacrifice appertaining to the *dēvas*, that is, to Indra and Varuṇa and the other *Vēdic* gods; while the sacrifice, which is, in the manner of the sacrifice itself, offered into the fire of *Brahman*, is obviously this very same ritual of worship directed towards the *Brahman* and conducted in obedience, not to an impelling interest, but to the obligatory sense of duty. Moreover, what is not a sacrificial ceremonial at all in any manner, may also be considered to constitute an act of divine worship, provided that thereby man's life of inevitable work is prevented from creating for him the bondage of *karma*. Such an extension in the import of sacrifice may be seen in some of the immediately following stanzas.

श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये संयमाग्निषु जुह्वति ।
शब्दादीन्विषयानन्ये इन्द्रियाग्निषु जुह्वति ॥ २६ ॥

26. Others offer (as an offering) and burn up the ear and the other senses in the fire of self-restraint. Others (again) offer and burn up sound and the other objects of the senses in the fire of the senses (themselves).

Here we have two processes of mental discipline compared to what we call a *hōma* in a sacrifice. The Sanskrit word *hōma* means the offering of a burnt-offering; and in this process something which is offered as an oblation is caused to be consumed in a ceremonially sacred fire. In the first of the two processes of mental discipline mentioned in this *ślōka*, the ear and the other senses form the oblation that is to be consumed, and self-restraint constitutes the fire wherein they are to be consumed. I am sure I need not tell you that this does not at all imply that those who perform this kind of sacrifice are to get rid of their senses, and thus lose the power of hearing, seeing, smelling, tasting and feeling by touch. On the other hand, what is expected of them is that they should earnestly endeavour to keep all their senses well under control. When uncontrolled, they are strong enough to make the best of us their slaves. The man, who is a slave of his senses, is apt to be carried away by the craving to enjoy the pleasures of the senses. He is certain to be as

averse to the experience of painful sensations as he is fond of enjoying pleasurable sensations. Thus to seek pleasure and to avoid pain become the chief aims of his life. In his over-ardent pursuit of pleasure he is doomed to meet with disappointment sooner or later. But what is of greater importance for us to know here is, that his life becomes in consequence notably dominated by sensuality and selfishness, and that his very soul becomes polluted thus with the taint of sinful *karma*. If such a man tries to free himself from his very unwholesome slavery to the senses, and succeeds well in his endeavour, he naturally frees himself thereby from the taint of sin, and becomes worthy in every way to reach the goal of God-attainment. Consequently, the endeavour to keep the senses well under control deserves in every way to be looked upon as real divine worship. This endeavour may either take the direction of not at all allowing the pleasurable as well as the painful sensations to reach the conscious mind; or it may, while freely allowing the mind to become aware of them, so guide it by means of a firm and forceful will as to make it impossible for them to give rise to any harm. The burning-up of the senses as an offering in the fire of self-restraint is evidently the latter kind of endeavour. This is the first of the two processes mentioned in this stanza, and is in fact much harder than the other endeavour of forcibly preventing the sensations from reaching the mind altogether. If the sensations are not allowed to reach the conscious mind at all, they are not likely to prove very strong as temptations. The second process of mental discipline referred to in this stanza is that of preventing the sensations from impressing themselves upon the wakeful mind; and hence it is that we are told that, in this process, sound and the other objects of the senses are offered as oblations to be burnt up in the fire of the senses themselves. The meaning of this is that the objects of the senses are not allowed to produce any effect beyond the immediate field of the senses: all their effect is so completely consumed in the senses themselves. It cannot be that to do this is impossible; for you must have known or at least heard of persons, who, as they say, having eyes, do not see, and, having ears, do not hear. To keep the knowing mind so completely detached from the senses is certainly possible. The sensory perception of an external object is generally associated with pain or pleasure: and all ordinary persons are prone to like pleasure and

dislike pain, for the reason that pleasure is agreeable while pain is not. The likes and dislikes so produced give rise to desires and to selfish attachments in all such persons, and thus bring them within the clutches of *karma*. Consequently, if we wish to get out of the clutches of *karma*, we have, with our will, so to control the mind as to quell all the cravings that are caused in it by desire after it has actually arisen in the heart: or, we may, by stubbornly ignoring our common tendency to like pleasure and to dislike pain, prevent the very origination of those cravings in us. Such are evidently the two kinds of sacrifice referred to in this stanza; and for the successful carrying out of both of them, we have in the end to depend entirely upon the strength of our will. We are, as you know, dealing in this context with how worship kills selfishness, and thereby makes man's life of work incapable of producing the clinging bondage of *karma* for him. No work of any kind can hinder the final deliverance of the soul of any earnest worker to whom all work is worship. The practice of this discipline of self-control, by which selfishness and sensuality are, as we have seen, effectively prevented from asserting themselves in the life of the aspirant, surely deserves to be looked upon as a form of divine worship. It is indeed so very true always and everywhere that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a contrite heart.

सर्वाणीन्द्रियकर्माणि प्राणकर्माणि चापरे ।
आत्मसंयमयोगाग्नौ जुह्वति ज्ञानदीपिते ॥ २७ ॥

27. Others (again) offer and burn up, as sacrificial offering, all the work of (their) senses and of (their) life in that fire of the practice of meditative self-control, which is enkindled by wisdom.

This *ślōka* also deals with a kind of psychological self-discipline, and looks upon it as a form of sacrificial worship. Here, however, we have a decidedly higher form of self-control brought to our notice than what we dealt with in the last *ślōka*, wherein the mental discipline that is thought of, does not seem to rise above the level of what is mere sense-control. To make the sensations become extinct in the senses themselves, so as not to allow the mind to be touched and tempted by them into the longing love of pleasure and the hateful

abhorrence of pain, is the main aim of this discipline of sense-control. It is largely a process of coercion, and is hence devoid of natural spontaneity. Here, in this *ślōka*, the object held in view is, however, the control of the sensations and the appetites by means of reasoned thought and steady meditation. By the work of the senses we have obviously to understand in this stanza the usual production of the sensations of pleasure and pain. Similarly the expression 'work of life' includes in its import all such activities as are impelled by our physical vitality which we commonly call life. These activities of physical vitality naturally give rise to the appetites first, and then lead us on to the anxious endeavour to satisfy them. Accordingly, the control of the senses and the control of the appetites are both included in the discipline described in this stanza. Moreover, the force to be used in controlling the senses and the appetites is not, in this case, merely that of a stubborn and undiscerning coercion. On the other hand, it is the force of meditative mental concentration depending upon the enlightened wisdom which results from the unerring apprehension of a great moral truth. And the great moral truth which has to be well apprehended in this matter is that slavery to the senses and the appetites is certain to make life sinful, and the emancipation of the soul very nearly impossible. You have been told already that the mere forced starvation of the senses cannot of itself give rise to the absolute abolition of the long-lingering relish in the heart for the pleasures of the senses. Even such a stubborn sense-starvation, as is sustained by sheer force, may sometimes prove somewhat helpful to the earnest aspirant after the freedom of the soul; it may enable him to keep in check, at least for some short time, what may otherwise turn out to be a very viciously and violently tyrannising master. But meditation and mental concentration, conducted under the calm influence of the illuminating wisdom, which is derived from an accurate knowledge of the nature and the destiny of the everlasting soul, can assuredly make the effort of the aspirant fully effective in producing in him the very desirable attitude of non-attachment in relation to all the cravings of desire. It is this higher form of the discipline of self-control, which is described as a *yajña* in this *ślōka*. When a comparatively lower form of psychological discipline, aiming at self-control, is allowed to have the credit of being a *yajña*, much more is a higher form thereof

entitled to such a credit. Thus divine worship may either take the form of material offerings offered in a sacrificial ceremonial, or it may well consist in the steady and earnest practice of various forms of ethical self-discipline and in the acquisition of spiritual self-control and self-culture.

द्रव्ययज्ञास्तपोयज्ञा योगयज्ञास्तथापरे ।
स्वाध्यायज्ञानयज्ञाश्च यतयः संशितव्रताः ॥ २८ ॥

28. Similarly (there are) others—disciplined aspirants possessed of a well sharpened resolution—who are material-object-sacrificers, austerity-practising-sacrificers, duty-doing-sacrificers, and scripture-learning and wisdom-winning sacrificers.

Here we have a kind of classified enumeration of the various forms which religious worship may assume. By a material-object-sacrifice we have to understand that form of sacrificial worship wherein the thing, which is offered as an offering, happens to be a material object of some kind—animal or vegetable as the case may be. Moreover, all religiously given gifts of money, and of all such things as may be purchased with the aid of money, come also under this head. The austerity-practising-sacrifice is, as you know, that form of religious worship, which consists in the practice of fasting, vigils, and other such processes of more or less painful physical and mental discipline, as are likely to be helpful to the aspirant in enabling him gradually to obtain the precious power of self-control. Those who perform this kind of religious worship are generally known as *tapasvins* in Sanskrit; and one of the commonest things they do is to subject the body to all sorts of pain with a view to deaden it to the feeling of pain altogether. There can be no doubt that this discipline also has an ethical aim, and is intended to singe what is perhaps the most fecund among the seeds of selfishness in human nature. That it can, in this manner, prove successful, is well borne out by the life-history of many saints known to the various great religions in the world. Hence *tapas*, or the practice of austerity, also deserves to be called a form of divine worship. Now please observe that it is the expression *yōga-yajñāḥ*, which I have translated as 'duty-doing sacrificers.' It really means those whose sacrifice consists

in *yōga*. Here *yōga* does not appear to me to mean the *ashṭāṅga-yōga*, which aims at the attainment of *samādhi* and self-realisation and God-realisation. The practice of mental concentration with the aid of meditation forms in fact an essential part of this eight-limbed *yōga*; and you know that this has already been referred to as *ātmasamyama-yōga*. The process of controlling the breath—which also forms a part of this same eight-limbed *yōga*—is taken into consideration in the next *ślōka*, wherein that also is declared to be a form of divine worship. Consequently the word *yōga*, as used in this stanza, has to be understood differently. I am of opinion that it means here that *yōga* which has been contrasted with *sāṅkhya*, that is, the *yōga* which consists in the appropriate performance of appropriate duties. Who indeed can or will ever say that the earnest endeavour to live such a flawless life of earnest duty is not a continuous offering of true worship to God? Lastly the scripture-learning and wisdom-winning sacrificers are obviously those, whose devotion to religion takes the form of piously conducted theological studies, with a view to secure thereby that kind of religious knowledge and philosophical wisdom, by which the true purpose of life may be correctly comprehended, and the proper plan of life be suitably laid out for the accomplishment of that purpose. It must be readily granted by all that a sincerely lived life of this kind of religious study and philosophical contemplation is a life of divine worship. We may easily learn from a careful study of modern comparative religion that, although *yajña* or sacrifice, as a notable religious institution, originally consisted, in almost all religions, of an offering of a more or less valuable animate or inanimate object to the deity or deities intended to be thereby worshipped and propitiated, still the means, whereby divine worship may be properly conducted and the moral fruits of such worship may be more and more adequately reaped, have considerably varied from time to time in the course of the natural advancement of more than one progressive religion known to the instructive history of humanity. The two important lines, along which progress has everywhere gone on in this matter, have invariably been those of a growing simplification of rites and ceremonials on the one side and a steady amplification of the contrition of the heart on the other, so as to make the sacrifice itself become more and more effectively a worthy means of moral discipline and spiritual self-culture. Thus the very

comprehensive meaning attached in this stanza to *yajña* as an act of divine worship appears to be quite fully justifiable: and all the aspirants, who adopt any of these various modes of divine worship, are worthy to be called *yatayaḥ*, inasmuch as every one of them has to do his work of worship with the needed aid of the mental power of self-control. In fact it is this mental power which gives to such aspirants their well sharpened resolution.

अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे ।
प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा प्राणायामपरायणाः ॥ २९ ॥
अपरे नियताहाराः प्राणान् प्राणेषु जुह्वति ।
सर्वेऽप्येते यज्ञविदो यज्ञक्षपितकल्मषाः ॥ ३० ॥

29. There are (also) others who are devoted to (the practice of) controlling the breath, and who (accordingly) obstruct the course of the in-going breath as well as of the out-going breath, and offer the in-going breath as an offering unto the out-going breath, and similarly (offer) the out-going breath unto the in-going breath.

30. There are others (again), who take (a very) limited (quantity of) food and offer the in-going breath as an offering unto the in-going breath itself. All these are indeed such knowers of the sacrifice, as have the stain (of their sin) destroyed by means of the sacrifice.

In these stanzas we are evidently told that the various processes of the breath-control, which constitutes a well-known element in the practice of the *yōga* leading to self-realisation and God-realisation in the state of *samādhi*, are also forms of divine worship, and may therefore be deservedly looked upon as forms of the religious sacrifice. By *prāṇāyāma*, we mean this practice of breath-control. The way, in which one acquires the power of controlling the breath, is by voluntarily varying the normal length of time, during which the processes of breathing in and breathing out take place under ordinary

circumstances. In the modern science of physiology they speak of these two processes of breathing in and breathing out as inspiration and expiration. Under ordinary circumstances most persons breathe in and breathe out some fifteen or sixteen times in every minute. In certain abnormal conditions of the body this rate of breathing is, however, seen to vary. In certain cases the process of breathing is quickened, and the number of respirations in a minute is accordingly increased. In other cases this process is slowed, and the number of breathings in a minute is hence diminished. Increased respiration means increased oxidation of the various tissues in the body, and a consequent increase in the quantity of heat therein generated. As a result of this the temperature of the body rises, and many of the organs in the body are forced to do extra work. Where, however, the process of breathing is slowed, the general level of the vitality of the body is thereby lowered, and the various organs of the body have on the whole to do less work. That quicker breathing introduces more, and slower breathing introduces less, oxygen into the blood, are both now understood to be easily demonstrable facts in physiology. Therefore by controlling voluntarily the rapidity of breathing, one may succeed more or less effectively in controlling the rate of flow of the energy of one's own physical life. You know that the attainment of *samādhi* through the practice of *yōga* requires that the body should in that state be kept at the lowest possible level of physical vitality. The necessity for the practice of *prāṇāyāma*, as an essential part of the practice of *yōga*, must indeed have arisen in consequence. This manner of voluntarily controlling the breath gives to the *yōgin* not only the power of either increasing or of decreasing the vigour and the rate of flow of his vital activities, but also the capability to possess a resolute and unshaking will, inasmuch as the breath-exercises involved in the process of *prāṇāyāma* are very largely dependent upon the unceasing exercise of a steadily wakeful and forceful will. Otherwise this very largely involuntary operation of breathing cannot be brought under voluntary control at all.

These breath-exercises are of three kinds. One of these is to go on breathing out for a great length of time so as thereby to empty the lungs of as much air as possible. The lungs cannot of course be exhausted of all air completely in any case. The second of these

exercises consists in going on breathing in for as great a length of time as is really possible, so that the lungs may thereby become filled with as much air as they can hold under the most favourable circumstances. The process of exhausting the lungs as far as possible of air by means of a long process of expiration is called in Sanskrit by the name of *rēchaka*: and the other process of filling in the lungs with air as much as possible by means of a long-continued process of inspiration goes by the name of *pūraka*. The third exercise is, however, known as *kumbhaka*: and while practising it, one should neither breathe in nor breathe out. After going through a prolonged process of expiration and exhausting the lungs of air as much as possible, they are filled in again with as much air as possible by means of a prolonged process of inspiration: and then it is that the *kumbhaka* exercise is practised so that for a noticeable length of time the lungs are allowed neither to breathe in nor to breathe out air. It is by the practice of these *rēchaka*, *pūraka* and *kumbhaka* breath-exercises that the *yōgin* obtains the power of voluntarily controlling the rate of flow of his physical energy, and is thus helped on to get into the state of *samādhi*, which appears to be physiologically comparable in many respects with the commonly known condition of trance. As in the case of the man in a trance, so also in the case of the *yōgin* in *samādhi*, the vitality of the body is at its lowest ebb; the pulse slowly beats and the lungs do not appear to be engaged in breathing at all. This state of low vitality does not of course mean that life is wholly extinct from the body, howsoever much it may seem to be so. The man in a trance may, and often does, get out of the trance so as to live his normal life once again. So also is the *yōgin* able to get out of the *samādhi* and live again his normal wakeful life, if he chooses to do so. Again, like the man in the state of trance, the *yōgin* in *samādhi* does not require food and is not in need of any large supply of oxygen to his blood. This means that, since the expenditure of energy in his body is very small, its supply also has to be equally small in proportion. It is owing to this duly proportionate adjustment between the supply and the expenditure of energy in the body that life is securely enough maintained in the state of trance as well as of *samādhi*. Otherwise, death through suffocation, or what they technically call asphyxia, might be the immediate outcome of *prāṇāyāma*. Since many *yōgins* are known to have well survived the successful practice

of *prāṇāyāma* and to have obtained thereafter the illumination of self-realisation in *samādhi*, we have no reason whatever to doubt the possibility of the results attributed to the practice of *prāṇāyāma* as an element in the practice of *yōga*. To my mind science does not seem to contradict such a possibility.

In the two stanzas which we are now trying to understand, we are told that some offer the inward breath as an oblation unto the fire consisting of the outward breath, that some others offer the outward breath as an offering unto the fire of the inward breath, and that others again offer the inward breath as an offering unto the fire of the inward breath itself. It ought to be at once evident to most of you, that we have in fact here a clear reference to the three breath-exercises of *rēchaka*, *pūraka* and *kumbhaka*, involved in the practice of *prāṇāyāma*, which are described as things equivalent to sacrificial acts of divine worship. The offering of the inward breath to be consumed in the outward breath means naturally the practising of a prolonged process of expiration, so as to make the expiratory process take up the whole time of the full inspiratory process also. This is the *rēchaka* exercise. Similarly the sacrifice of offering the outward breath to be consumed in the fire of the inward breath must mean the practice of a fully prolonged process of inspiration, and amounts to the same thing as the *pūraka* breath-exercise. Again we may, in the same manner, see that what is really meant by the offering of the inward breath unto the fire consisting of the inward breath itself is nothing other than the *kumbhaka* breath-exercise. The longer one makes the duration of this *kumbhaka* exercise, the slower will of course become the rate of flow of vital energy in one's body. That is obviously why one has, as we are told here, to live upon a very limited quantity of food during the steady practice of this *kumbhaka* exercise. The reason why these various kinds of breath-exercises deserve to be looked upon as forms of divine worship is surely because they are conducive to the attainment of *samādhi* by the aspirant striving after self-realisation and God-realisation. The *prāṇāyāma* exercise may in itself mean nothing at all, even when it has been carried out so far as to give to the man who practises it the power to put himself voluntarily into a state of complete inwardness and low vitality resembling that of a trance. Indeed, no great moral

or spiritual value can be attached to this power of voluntarily getting into a trance condition of low vitality. It is only when this power is used to win the illuminating and enfranchising vision of the soul and of God, that it can become worthy to be called a form of divine worship. Such self-realisation and God-realisation are both declared to be possible of attainment in the state of *samādhi*. Unless, therefore, this practice of breath-control is carried out with a view to the ultimate attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation, none of the exercises constituting *prāṇāyāma* can well deserve the dignity of being looked upon as an act of real divine worship. Even the attainment of *samādhi* itself, if directed to other ends than spiritual realisation and inner illumination, is rightly apt to be held in low esteem. The endeavour, for instance, to attain the occult and supranormal mental powers, known to be derivable from the practice of *yōga*, cannot make its practice equivalent to the conduct of divine worship. That *prāṇāyāma*, if properly directed to the attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation, may help man in casting away from himself all his sinful feelings of sensuality and selfishness, has certainly to be granted. Accordingly it is also a worthy form of divine worship.

That even *prāṇāyāma* has been declared here to be a form of divine worship is of importance to us in another way also. It enables us to see that the due offer of worship to God need not mean always anything like going through a formal religious ceremonial. Please do not understand me to say that all those forms of worship, which consist in going through formal religious ceremonials, are condemned in the *Gītā* as being either useless or unworthy. There is not one word of condemnation uttered in this context in relation to what may be called the religion of ritualism. On the other hand, it is in fact the ritualistic form of divine worship as represented by the sacrifice, which, being the oldest and the most widely prevalent kind of worship, is taken to be the characteristically typical form of divine worship; and all the other kinds of worship mentioned here are merely declared to be equivalent to it. We have further to take note of the important fact that we are told here, that the true purpose of all forms of divine worship is the washing away of the stain of sinfulness from mankind. Accordingly, whatever is

calculated to serve this purpose either directly or indirectly—all that has to be looked upon as a form of divine worship. So there may well be many varieties in the forms of divine worship conceived in this light. A man may not go through any kind whatsoever of a religious ceremonial; that is, he may not perform any formal religious rite of any kind, he may not even go to a temple or a church or a mosque, he may not bow down to any image of any god or utter any prayers in any language addressed to any deity; still it is quite possible for that man to make the whole course of his life a continuous process of divine worship. About a dozen different kinds of *yajñas* have been thus mentioned here; and of these only two or three are formal and ritualistic in character, and consist in the performance of a sacrificial ceremonial of some sort. The remaining ones are mostly processes of physical, mental and moral discipline, calculated to produce in us the power to withstand temptations and to obtain the helpful guidance of spiritual illumination through self-realisation and God-realisation. All these processes of discipline do not operate in the same way, nor are they all equally effective in removing from us the stain of selfish and sinful *karma*. Nevertheless, they can all serve such an end, often even more effectively than purely ritualistic forms of divine worship. Hence it is that even those, who do not perform the sacrificial ceremonial in any manner, but only practise some one or other of the various kinds of discipline aiming at self-conquest and self-realisation, are said to be such knowers of the sacrifice, as indeed have all their stain of sin washed off wholly by means of the sacrifice. The original aim of sacrificial worship has everywhere been divine propitiation with a view to have the life of the worshipper made thereby happier, more prosperous, and more full of the pleasures of life. But the aim of all worship is here in the *Gītā* conceived to be the achievement of soul-emancipation through self-realisation leading to God-realisation; and the earlier forms of sacrificial worship are therefore permissible at a later stage in the development of religious life, only to the extent to which they may prove directly or indirectly helpful in enabling worshippers to achieve the true salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. Hence we cannot fail to observe here a great change in the position of the pivot-point of religious life. The more or less selfish pursuit of pleasure and prosperity, which seems to have formed the first aim

of religious worship and divine propitiation, has had to give way to the unselfish life of love and duty culminating in the achievement of self-realisation and God-attainment. Gentlemen, please let me conclude our work here for to-day.

xxiii

In our last class we were dealing with the various kinds of *yajñas*, or sacrificial acts of worship, which are specified to be such in the *Bhagavadgītā*. We then learnt that they are all physical or mental acts, by performing which one may well expect to become free from the unwholesome effects of selfish and sinful *karma*. And we further endeavoured to understand how, if a man does all his duties in life with the conviction that, in doing them as he ought to do, he is simply carrying out the worship of God, his life of work does not produce in relation to him any such tendency as is calculated to compel his soul to become imprisoned again and again in material embodiments. We, moreover, came to know then that divine worship may be of various kinds. It may be a genuine sacrificial worship offered formally to the gods, or it may be worship offered to the Supreme Being conceived as *Brahman*; it may be worship in which material gifts are given away either in charity or as a religious offering, or it may be worship of a moral character consisting of an earnest effort by the worshipper to get rid of some common human mental or moral infirmity or weakness. In these and many other eligible ways it is held to be possible for man to worship God; and in whatsoever manner we try to worship Him, we may well be, by means of every variety of our acts of worship, fitted to become free in due time from the stain of selfishness and sin, so that we unfailingly obtain in the end the supreme salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. It is therefore not merely a ceremonial rite of religious worship and offering that is spoken of as a sacrifice. By that word we often express, as you know, the unselfish act of one's giving up one or more of such things as one is ordinarily apt to call one's own. Thus the getting rid of *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*—of i-ness and mine-ness—through the simple voluntary giving away of gifts may also go by the name of a sacrifice. Indeed, in every act of worship, in the offering of any gift to any kind of divine being, there is a transformation of something, which

was the worshipper's own property, into something which, even according to himself, can no longer be his own. From the very beginning of the history of human religion, from the time when man began to look up to superior divine powers and agencies for help and guidance, worship has always implied some sacrifice or other in this sense, and has thus meant all along a more or less effective endeavour to overcome the selfish feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*. Accordingly, we have to make out the immediate aim of *yajña* to be the weakening of selfishness so as to lead to the creation in all worshippers of a leaning in favour of self-control and moral purity and unselfish human service. That being so, there can be no two opinions regarding the truthfulness of what is given in the *ślōka* with which we commence our work to-day.

यज्ञशिष्टामृतभुजो यान्ति ब्रह्म सनातनम् ।
नायं लोकोऽस्त्ययज्ञस्य कुतोऽन्यः कुरुसत्तम ॥ ३१ ॥

31. Those, who eat of the ambrosia, consisting of the remnant of the sacrifice,—(they) go to the everlasting *Brahman*. O thou the best of Kurus, for him that performs no sacrifice, (even) this world is not: how (then can) the other (be)?

Most of you may well remember that, while we were engaged in the study of the third chapter of the *Gītā*, we came upon the teaching that the good people, who eat of only the remnant of the sacrifice, become thereby free from all impurities, but that those, who cook food exclusively for their own sake, feed themselves in fact with sin. Here in this *ślōka* we have that same teaching given in a more comprehensive manner, so as to include all the various material and moral forms of divine worship within the meaning of the word *yajña* or sacrifice. Please note that in this stanza the remnant of the sacrifice is compared to *amṛita*, the ambrosia of the gods. That is why, in my translation, I have advisedly pointed out that remnant to constitute the divine ambrosia. I am aware you all know well the very interesting mythological story given in our *Purāṇas* regarding how the gods were enabled to obtain their immortalising ambrosia. What is of real importance to us to note here is the power of this ambrosia to bestow immortality on all those, who are allowed to

have the great privilege of partaking of it. The gods themselves are declared to owe their immortality to its efficacy as a producer of everlasting deathlessness. Therefore the comparison of the remnant of the sacrifice to the ambrosia of the gods can be truly appropriate, only when it is possible to maintain that the eating of the remnant of the sacrifice is also capable of bestowing immortality on all those who eat it. Obviously this is the motive of the comparison here; for, we are told quite distinctly in this same stanza that those, who partake of this ambrosial remnant, become worthy of attaining the everlasting *Brahman*. Please note also that in the stanza of the third chapter (III. 13), to which I just drew your attention, we have been told that to eat of the remnant of the sacrifice enables the good people, who do so, to become free from all impurities. I need not tell you that the attainment of such a complete freedom from impurities is a necesssary pre-requisite for the attainment of the *Brahman*. That none can go on sinning, and hope to attain salvation at the same time, is quite a self-evident fact. So long as the stain of *karma* clings to the heart of man, it cannot be possible for him to obtain the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment; and the clinging stain of *karma* can be got rid of only by living the life of disinterested duty well and worthily, since it is through unselfish service alone that the sinful force of selfishness can be effectively counteracted. I have told you so often that most of us, common men and women here, do not find it easy to command this kind of true unselfishness in our lives. We have therefore to seek and find the aid of something which will induce and sustain such unselfishness in us. A thing of that kind is *yajña* or divine worship, which, as you all know, rests ultimately on the fear of God as well as on the love of God. Therefore, to worship God and to eat of the remnant of the sacrifice in true religious devotion and pure piety from day to day is, indeed, to court consciously, and often even unconsciously, the steady inducement of enfranchising unselfishness in our own lives. It may, of course, be taken for granted that the conscious endeavour to kill selfishness directly has in it more of the virtue of divine worship than any unconscious adoption of less direct means for the attainment of that very same end. It is not possible for all people to adopt all forms of religious worship appropriately. Some are fit to adopt higher and more direct forms of divine worship than others. There are some, to

whom the material and ritualistic aspect of religious worship appears to be highly suitable and important; they cannot rise easily above what is called the religion of ritualism. There are others, to whom the religion of ritualism is likely to appear to be unfit and antiquated: to them the moral forms of religious worship are sure to be of greater importance than the material forms. Whichever may be the form of religious worship that is in a man's power to carry out in earnestness and in true sincerity, if only he carries that out well and heartily, he is certain to be helped on in his holy ascent to the lofty pinnacle of spiritual perfection and soul-emancipation. Such seems to be the broad and universally liberal doctrine inculcated here regarding the nature and aim of religious worship.

The statement that even this world is not for him, who performs no sacrifice, evidently means that such a man cannot enjoy the good things of this world, and cannot make his own life in society happy and helpful. We hear it said somewhat frequently in these days that the desire in the heart, which is invariably prompted by selfishness, is a very strong and truly natural incentive to progress, and cannot therefore be discarded at all as anything other than worthy. They say that it is that temperament, which is ambitious and jumps up with joy and alacrity on seeing really suitable opportunities for self-aggrandisement by means of struggle and competition—they say that it is such a temperament alone which is always conducive to the growth of prosperity. They also say further that the man, who retires from all competitive conflicts in life, and feels that the true purpose of life is better attained by sacrifice and self-abnegation, is incapable of achieving any good either to himself or to the community to which he belongs. But we have seen already how selfishness and the love of self-aggrandisement need not be looked upon as inevitable impelling forces even in respect of the acquisition of wealth and material prosperity. What I mean by this is that in a properly constituted society, the members whereof know well and do well their respective duties, the steady growth of wealth and material prosperity is quite possible, even if selfishness in no way forms an element in the motive of the workers to do well all their work in life. It is of course a very different thing to say that men and societies, as at present constituted, are mostly dependent upon selfishness

and the love of self-aggrandisement for the stimulation of their endeavour to win wealth and to secure prosperity. But this ought not to deter us from looking up to the higher ideal of unselfish work and achievement. Moreover, the acquisition of wealth and much material prosperity does not always mean the same thing as the acquisition of wholesome happiness. History gives us more than one instance of how there may be too much of that sort of material prosperity, which flows out of the polluted fountain of selfishness and an inordinate love of self-aggrandisement; in fact this very prosperity has often turned out to be an incurable and wasting moral disease forming the source of much fatal weakness and decay. So many individuals and communities of individuals have often enough been smothered unto death under the choking burden of the material prosperity that is the product of selfishness. They may not and often do not, in such cases, know how their own ruin is slowly and steadily creeping on to the sad goal of its inevitable fulfilment; but that only makes their situation the more dangerous and pitiable. In addition to all this, we have always to bear in mind that no worthy happiness of any kind is possible in life without the self-sacrifice which is impelled by love; this holds true so much, that we may, without the fear of any serious contradiction, say that the loveless man, who endeavours to live his life altogether for himself, fails most miserably in carrying out his egregiously foolish object. Such a life of unalloyed selfishness is in fact altogether impossible in the very nature of things; and whoever tries to live such a life is certain to come to know that, on that condition, life is not worth living at all. It is indeed clear that the life of the absolutely selfish man does not contribute to his own happiness or improvement; and his life is, even at its best, incapable of helping on any kind of progress in the society, which gives him the noteworthy advantages of an ordered home-life and all its wholesome environments. Again, judging from history, we find that the selfish men and women of all ages have almost completely disappeared from the memory of mankind, and have left no force of any kind behind them, which makes for progress and the advancement of the lasting happiness of humanity. On the other hand, almost all historical heroes have been highly disinterested workers with a heart filled to overflowing with love, to whom sacrifice appears to have been, like the very air of their breath, a natural necessity. If thus we make out

that selfishness destroys the very purpose of man's life here upon the earth, we cannot find it hard to see how that same quality makes it impossible for us to attain the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. To the absolutely selfish man, therefore, this world serves no end and is as good as non-existent. And the other world is, of course, even more so.

एवं बहुविधा यज्ञा वितता ब्रह्मणो मुखे ।
कर्मजान् विद्धि तान् सर्वानेवं ज्ञात्वा विमोक्ष्यसे ॥ ३२ ॥

32. In this manner various kinds of sacrifices have been spread out in the mouth of the *Brahman*. Understand all of them to be work-born ; knowing (them to be) such, you will become completely free.

Here, in the statement that various kinds of sacrifices have been spread out in the mouth of the *Brahman*, the expression 'in the mouth of the *Brahman*' is capable of being understood in different ways, according to the meaning we give to the word *Brahman*. Some say that the word *Brahman* has here the same meaning as the word *Vēda*, and that therefore what we are told in this stanza is simply this—that various sacrifices have been described and enjoined in the religious scriptures of the Hindus. Others, however, consider that the *Brahman* referred to here is one of the *Vēdic* gods, not indeed different from the Brahmā of the *Purāṇas*, who is, as you are aware, one of the gods of the well known Hindu trinity. If we understand the word *Brahman* to represent a god or Dēva in this manner, we are led to the conclusion that what we are told here is that various are the sacrifices that are offered to the *Vēdic* gods. A third meaning which is given to the word *Brahman* here is to make it signify the Supreme Being of the *Vēdānta*. It is this last meaning of the word which seems to me to be really appropriate in this context, inasmuch as that sacrifice, which is here specially characterised as *Brahma-karma*, has been seen by us to be a form of worship which is directed to propitiate the Supreme Being of the *Vēdānta*. Moreover, it is only in relation to this Supreme Being that we can rightly say that all worship of all forms is ultimately destined to go to Him. I dare say you remember how we have been told already in a *ślōka*

belonging to this very chapter (IV. 11.) that, in whatsoever manner people endeavour to approach God, in that same manner they attain Him, and that therefore all persons in all manner of ways follow the path, which, in the end, unmistakably leads all of them to Him. It is this Supreme Being—spoken of in the *Vēdānta* as the *Brahman*—that is alone capable of constituting the true goal of all forms of worship conducted by all sorts of men and women in all lands and in all ages. And here, in this context, we are, as you know, dealing with the effective usefulness of all possible forms of religious worship as suitable means for the acquisition of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. If all forms of worship are in this way really useful, and if they are all therefore clearly declared to have been spread out in the mouth of the *Brahman*, we cannot but draw from this the inference that the word *Brahman* here means God—the Supreme Being of the *Vēdānta*. Accordingly the statement, that all the various forms of religious worship known to us are spread out in the mouth of the *Brahman*, means that God is the one ultimate goal of all religions as also of all forms and processes of religious worship. Permit me to draw your attention once again to this beautifully all-comprehensive toleration of the religion of the *Vēdānta*. I am sure you know that such a spirit of comprehensive toleration is not, at any rate in the *Vēdānta*, the result of any hasty or thoughtless sentiment of indifference and weak faith. On the other hand it follows naturally from what is taken in it to be the plan of the divine government of the universe. If only we succeed in grasping that plan aright without prejudice and without partiality, I am quite certain that we cannot avoid pronouncing the vision of every such person to be truly distorted and defective, as does not see beauty and sweet reasonableness in this serene spirit of comprehensive toleration in relation to all forms of religion and modes of religious worship.

The next point requiring elucidation in this stanza is the meaning of the statement that all sacrifices of all sorts are work-born. You know how this question of the nature and meaning of sacrifice has been taken up for consideration here with the object of enabling us to make out thep ossibility of seeing 'work' in 'no-work' and also 'no-work' in 'work.' Some sacrifices are of course abundantly full of various forms of activity on the part of the sacrificer and

numerous other persons—such as the many priests and other functionaries, who are engaged in helping him in the performance of the various sacrificial rites in the duly prescribed manner. But some among the many forms of sacrifice, which are described here, do not certainly appear to be quite so full of work, and cannot therefore be so accurately described to be work-born. There is, for instance, the sacrifice consisting of the practice of *prāṇāyāma;* and in connection with the performance of this sacrifice, one may well ask—"What work indeed does a man do, who, seating himself erectly and comfortably on an even and somewhat elevated platform, simply goes on controlling his breath?" Whether the man, who in this way simply tries to control his breath by practising the processes of *prāṇāyāma*, really does work or is absolutely passive and inert, can be easily enough made out by us, if only we are prepared to try and go through the experiment ourselves. The experiment is sure to convince us that the practice of *prāṇāyāma* means the doing of very hard work indeed. Suppose again we want to curb well the power of our senses, so as effectively to prevent them from leading us into temptations, then we have to go through what may be called the sacrificial worship of sense-control: and whoever goes through the performance of this kind of religious worship is certain to find out how much strain is indeed involved in an effective exercise of rigorous sense-control. The power of self-control—whether it be derived from breath-control or direct sense-control—can never be obtained without adequate effort and abundant work. In fact in Sanskrit philosophy, as current in India, they do not think of work as being altogether confined to the body. They hold that every man has three instruments of work at his disposal, which together go by the name of *tri-karaṇa.* The word *tri-karaṇa* itself does not mean any thing other than 'three instruments of work'; and these instruments are declared to be our mind (*manas*), our language (*vāk*), and our body (*kāya*). This evidently implies that we can all perform work with the aid of our mind or language or body as an instrument of work. That there is such a thing as mental work is widely recognised by all thoughtful people; and bodily work actually typifies everywhere the general human conception of work. And work through language is distinguished, from bodily work on the one hand and also from mental work on the other, probably for the reason that in it both mental effort and bodily effort are together

involved. Anyhow, if we bear in mind that it is possible for us to do work by means of one or more of these three instruments of work, we may at once see how true it is to say that all the various forms of sacrifice here mentioned are work-born, since no sacrifice of any kind among them can be carried out without the performance of the work which is accomplishable through one or more of these instruments of work. Thus all worship has to be of the nature of work. Although we cannot say that ultimately, in the case of all persons, all their work in life turns out to be worship, still we know, from our knowledge of how work may become worship, that no work can be other than worship in the lives of those unselfish sages and saints, who are completely free from all attachment to the fruits of work. Therefore, even as all worship has to be work, so also may all work be turned into worship.

How does this knowledge, that all sacrifices are work-born, enable one to become completely free? This is a very natural question for us to ask here. The freedom which is referred to in this stanza is of course the freedom of the soul from the bondage of *karma*; and it is this freedom which is said here to be capable of being won by means of the knowledge that all worship is work-born. The idea intended to be conveyed by this statement is that that life, in which all work is made equivalent to worship, is fully calculated not only to prevent the work performed therein from creating those tendencies, which lead to the production of the bondage of *karma*, but also to break to pieces the fetters that still remain as forged by all the unspent *karma* of the past. Even as it is work that forges fetters for the soul of man, even so it is work itself that can really bring about its final liberation from the fettered bondage of *karma*. So long as self-emancipation and the associated God-attainment happen to be the highest among all the objects of human pursuit, and so long as these highest objects are capable of attainment solely through work, and so long again as we have all inevitably to live in the world the life of work in obedience to the inviolable mandate of nature—so long it is utterly impossible for any thing other than work to constitute the chief and immediate function or aim of life. Asceticism, renunciation and resignation may form only particular aspects of the mental attitude of the active worker: they do not and cannot authorise

anything like passivity or absolute worklessness. If they did, salvation would have to be attained by some means other than work, whether that means in any manner deserved to be looked upon as a form of divine worship or not. If the doing of our duties in life well and with absolute unselfishness is the only means for the attainment of salvation, at the same time that it is also the means to make our work in life equivalent to divine worship, we cannot then ignore safely our obligation to learn to do all our duties appropriately and with perfect unselfishness. You are aware that *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti* are generally accepted among us as the means, which enable us with greater or less difficulty to acquire that thorough unselfishness which must be made to pervade fully our life of strenuous endeavour and steady and successful work. If work—or *karma*—is itself to be made the means for the killing of our tendency in favour of selfishness, then surely our devotion to duty for its own sake has to become an over-mastering passion with us. If wisdom—or *jñāna*—is to make us altogether unselfish, our realisation of the immateriality, immutability and immortality of the soul, as contrasted with the materiality, mutability and mortality of the body, must be so very strong and vivid as to make the life of the flesh highly disgusting and wholly unattractive in the pure white light of the life of the spirit. Again, if devotion and love to God—which we call *bhakti*—is to help us in acquiring that great moral strength, which is needed to undermine effectively our almost instinctive love of the low life of the flesh in preference to the life of the spirit, then this love of God should reign supreme in our hearts and should spontaneously transmute itself into the service of man. Whether it be the life of duty or the life of wisdom or the life of love,—that life has to be lived actually by us, so that we may thereby go through the whole range of the steady performance of work as required for the attainment of dispassionate disinterestedness and the fulfilment of the true aim of our embodied existence. But, in taking work to be thus the main requisite of life, at the same time that we happen to look upon it as an inevitable factor therein, we should not forget that the highest object, which we have to pursue through work, ought to be nothing less than the supreme salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. We may quite easily see that to work is very rightly the portion of all persons in life; but then we cannot at all forget safely that work itself has the

soul's salvation for its chief end and aim. In fact it is this that is brought out in the next *ślōka*.

श्रेयान् द्रव्यमयाद्यज्ञाज्ज्ञानयज्ञः परन्तप ।
सर्वं कर्माखिलं पार्थ ज्ञाने परिसमाप्यते ॥ ३३ ॥

33. The sacrifice (which is of the nature) of (winning) wisdom is superior to the sacrifice consisting of material offerings : all work in its entirety culminates in wisdom, O foe-foiling Arjuna.

It is worthy of note that in this stanza all the various kinds of sacrifices that have been mentioned in the context here are classified under the two heads of *dravya-yajña* and *jñāna-yajña*, which may with very fair accuracy be rendered into 'material sacrifice' and 'moral sacrifice'. In the material sacrifice material offerings are offered to the deity or deities that are worshipped : but in what we have called the moral sacrifice the thing aimed at is in fact the acquisition of that wisdom, which may be derived from duly undergoing with earnestness some appropriate form of physical or mental discipline calculated to strengthen the power of the will and to improve the capacity for self-control. Seeing that all sacrifices, material as well as moral, are looked upon here as forms of divine worship, and are thus held to be capable of liberating the soul from the bondage of *karma*, so as to cause it, through the natural attainment of its own intrinsic and unblemished condition, to become full of the light and love that are divine,—it follows as a matter of course that that form of sacrifice, which is seen to be more directly conducive to this supreme end, is positively superior to the other form, which is only less directly helpful in enabling one to attain that end. We have seen how the ethical value of those sacrifices, in which only material offerings are offered, consists in their power to develop unselfishness slowly and steadily in the worshipper, although not always without the aid of motives of selfishness. It is, as you know, in full accordance with the plan of nature to evolve altruism out of egoism ; but none can therefore say that egoism, which is much more common, is any the more natural than altruism. Nevertheless, it must be evident to all observant

and thoughtful minds that, in the province of man's ethical evolution, altruism is the end for which egoism happens to be a more or less temporarily utilised means. Since it is very generally a common weakness of man to mistake in many matters the means for the end, we need not at all consider it to be even in the least degree strange, if many among us are invariably seen to be dominated largely by egoistic instincts and ideals. And the egoism, which is thus mistaken to be an end in itself, hinders indubitably the healthy growth of sympathy and love and charity, which are of necessity the foundation principles of all altruistically ordered lives. It is this aptness of egoism to be in this manner misused that makes it often so very dangerous morally, and compels us to come to the certain conclusion that it is always safe and wholesome to burn up the very germs of selfishness in our nature. That, which is here in this stanza of the *Bhagavadgītā* called *jñānayajña*, meaning wisdom-winning-sacrifice,—that really aims at securing the complete prevention of the very germination of selfishness in our hearts ; and in the case of a man of well endowed and well arranged mental parts, such a *jñāna-yajña* need not, and as a matter of fact does not, give rise to the obliteration of love. On the other hand, you will be led to learn by and by that one of the finest fruits of the successful accomplishment of the *jñāna-yajña* is the acquisition of *samadṛishṭi*—or the vision of equality—through self-realisation and God-realisation, and that the life, which is founded on such a vision of comprehensive equality, has to put that very vision of equality into daily and hourly practice in the way of manifesting universal sympathy and rendering free and loving service to all beings. Hence there can be no doubt that *jñāna-yajña* is a nearer and more direct means for the attainment of the supreme end of soul-emancipation than *dravya-yajña*. Thus it is that the former —that is, the wisdom-winning-sacrifice—is superior to the latter, which is, as you know, the sacrifice of mere material offerings.

This superiority of the wisdom-winning-sacrifice to the sacrifice of material offerings is again emphasised in this *ślōka* by the statement that all work in its entirety culminates in wisdom. It is indeed of great importance for us to know clearly what this statement really means. It may very well be taken to suggest the rather common idea that men learn wisdom through experience. It is, however, seen to

be true in many cases that experience does not at all lead to the acquisition of wisdom. What in fact happens in such cases is that, the temptation to do wrong being very powerful, the already experienced evil consequences of wrong-doing turn out to be too weak to overcome the alluring power of the temptation. It is not that persons of this kind are, even after their experience, altogether unaware of the evil consequences of wrong-doing. As a matter of fact they know the evil consequences quite well enough, and yet foolishly run the risk of courting those consequences again and again. Students of psychology are aware that it is in the very nature of the constitution of our minds to acquire experience through our varied intercourse with the external world, and that such intercourse is brought about by every one of the activities of the life of work that has to be lived by us. It is on such experience, so acquired, that almost the whole of the edifice of human knowledge rests; and it is largely through the knowledge, so built up, that man learns the wisdom needed for the ascertainment of the true *summum bonum* of life, as also for the shaping of his conduct so as thereby to attain that *summun bonum* in the end without fail. Therefore there can indeed be no denying that ordinarily work is the natural parent of wisdom. We may, as a matter of fact, go even so far as to say with certainty that all work is bound to lead to the attainment of true wisdom in the long run. But obviously the statement made here, to the effect that all work in its entirety culminates in wisdom, means something more: and that is—that the attainment of wisdom is the real goal of life very much more than any accomplishment of work. There is a danger of this interpretation of this statement being misunderstood. It does not certainly mean that the life of thought unassociated with work is in any manner the ideal life. Nor does it in any way contradict the position that work is so vital a factor in life, that, without it, life would be in no way any better than defunct. The real significance of this interpretation is not only to give due recognition to the place of work in the economy of life, but also to draw at the same time our attention to the fact that work in itself cannot be the supreme aim of life. Although the life of every embodied being has inevitably to be one of work, we ought not to commit the mistake of looking upon work, which is merely a means, as constituting an end in itself. Even the *karma-yōgin*, who is conceived to live the life of duty for its own sake, is expected to rise to a

higher stage in the realisation of truth and wisdom by the very means of his life of enthusiastic devotion to duty for its own sake. In the case of the *karma-yōgin*, work always happens to be in itself, as it is so commonly expressed by our authoritative teachers, both the means and the end. This sort of idealisation of work, which we call by the name *karma-yōga*, is, as you know, well calculated to give rise to that freedom from covetous attachment and selfishness, by which the embodied soul is naturally enabled to obtain its final liberation from all imposed limitations. If, in this manner, we are entitled to look upon *karma-yōga* also as a worthily suitable means for the attainment of the freedom of *mōksha*, it ought to follow logically from this that all such work, as is worthily done in the spirit of true devotion and worship, has its culmination in the attainment of that wisdom and that bliss which ever belong to the state of *mōksha*. It seems to me that it is this kind of relation between work and wisdom, which we are called upon to understand from this stanza. You will see, as we proceed, how well this conclusion of ours is borne out by all the remaining stanzas in this chapter.

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥ ३४ ॥

यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पाण्डव ।
येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मयि ॥ ३५ ॥

34. Do you (therefore) understand that wisdom, which the wise men, who have seen the truth, will teach unto you on (your) prostrating (yourself in reverence before them), on (your) addressing questions (to them), and on (your) rendering service (unto them),

35.—(That wisdom), by knowing which you will not, O Arjuna, again get into delusion in this manner, and through which you will see all beings in (their) entirety in yourself (first) and then in Me.

We have been told already that all work done in the spirit of religious devotion and worship culminates in true wisdom in the

end. And we have also been able to learn that certain forms of the work of worship are superior to certain other forms, in that they lead us more quickly and more directly to win that wisdom wherein all worthy work has to culminate. It may well be conceived that some may naturally argue that, since wisdom of this kind is declared to constitute rightly the culmination of a life of worthy work worthily executed, such wisdom cannot be acquired except at the end of a long process of the trying discipline of hard and laborious work extending over as many re-incarnations of the soul as may be found to be necessary for the purpose. It may further be maintained that, since each of us has to live his own life, the wisdom constituting the true culmination of the righteous life of noble and worthy work cannot be teachable, and must be obtained by each of us for himself. We are, however, told here that even this culminating wisdom of life is capaple of being transmitted from one person to another through teaching. The wise men, who have seen the truth, may teach this wisdom to those, who have not themselves seen the truth, and are not hence blessed with true wisdom. I consider it to be one of the greatest blessings of man that it is so possible for him to be taught. If absolute incorrigibility except through unaided self-correction had been his natural fate, his life would assuredly have been very much more miserable and burdensome and very much less animated and cheered by the prospect of any speedy progress towards the blissful goal of happy light and love. In these modern days, we all recognise the advantages of education so well, that we consider it very wrong to leave an individual wholly to himself in the matter of acquiring any kind of wisdom or skill or learning. To let a man alone thus to be enlightened and improved by his own experiences and efforts is to deny to him the advantages of the good guidance which methodical education is capable of affording so amply. Who, among us, does not know that the chief value of the guidance, which education gives, is really due to the accumulated experience of many past generations of men and women,—of such as indeed did, in their days and by their own life and labour, help forward the progress of true righteousness and prosperity in the unceasing march of the world's advancing civilisation? Even the apprentice under a common carpenter, for instance, learns quite easily from directly imparted instruction much that many others before him must have learnt mainly through laborious personal experience,

probably as often marked by failures as by successes. Accordingly, to receive appropriate instruction from one or more duly qualified teachers in respect of the learning of any science or art is certainly nothing less than coming easily into possession of the many results that have accrued to civilisation from the accumulated experience of generations of past learners and labourers. This way of estimating the value of education happens to be even more markedly true in the case of learning that philosophic wisdom of life, which is in complete accordance with truth and goodness, than in the case of learning anything else: for the learning of such a wisdom requires, as you know, the previous killing of all self-love, while in the learning of other things this same self-love is often found to be a very useful and ready aid. It is hence but right that this wisdom of unselfishness happens to be such a thing as can be truly taught only by those wise persons who have themselves positively seen the truth. In regard to the teaching of this wisdom, none, who is not himself a seer, is entitled to be a teacher. And when the teacher, who has fully the requisite title to teach, comes to do his beneficent work among us, we, as humble learners, are naturally bound to conduct ourselves appropriately in relation to him, so that we may amply convince him that we are really sincere and in earnest in seeking from him the benefit of his benignant spiritual light and unerring insight into truth.

To have seen the truth is thus the essential qualification of the worthy teacher of religion and spiritual wisdom. Similarly the disciple, who is the learner, is also expected to have his qualifications. They are, as given here, *praṇipāta*—reverential prostration, *paripraśna*—earnest questioning, and *sēvā*—service. You know how prostrating one's self before a teacher is considered among us to be the most respectful way of saluting him and paying homage to him. The desire to show due respect to the teacher attunes the mind of the disciple properly for the reverential receipt of the precious teaching to be given to him by his wise master, who has himself had the high and noble privilege of seeing the truth. We can never learn any wisdom from those for whom we have no great regard, and to whom we give no place of honour in the interior of our hearts. Of course this attitude of reverence towards the teacher is not intended to enforce on the part of the disciple any thing like the weak spirit of

unquestioning receptivity and slavish acquiescence: for we are immediately told here that addressing questions to the teacher is among the appropriate attributes of a true learner of wisdom. It should never be supposed that to question the teacher freely on points of doubt or difficulty is to disregard the authoritativeness of his teaching. On the other hand, the disciple, who does not question and enquire, betrays a real want of attention and earnestness, which is wholly undesirable. Only two kinds of disciples do not put questions to their master—those that know well already all that the master teaches, and those that do not very much care, to know well what the master teaches. The disciple, who has become as good a seer of truth as the master, need no longer continue his discipleship under the master: he has himself become entitled to hold the honored office of the teacher. Similarly, the disciple, who does not care to know well what the master teaches, may also discontinue his discipleship, as, by its formal continuance, he surely does not obtain any advantage of any kind. Thus the alert spirit of questioning and enquiry is generally characteristic of all earnest disciples who are really anxious to achieve progress in their pursuit of truth. The third requisite mentioned here, as needed on the part of the disciple, is service rendered unto the master. This is obviously intended to be a means for the enforcement of the duty of gratitude on the part of the earnest learner in relation to his obliging master. It does not mean that the teacher is entitled to exact such service from the disciple in return for the teaching of wisdom that he gives to him. That would make the teaching work of even great seers morally mercenary. Moreover, the true value of genuine gratitude is to be found in its altogether uncompelled spontaneity. Indeed, that gratitude, which is not spontaneous, is no gratitude at all. The main idea underlying this obligation of service is, that the disciple should not only derive benefit from the worthy lessons of wisdom which he receives from his master, but that his whole life as a disciple should also prove to be a preparation for that larger life of love and unselfishness, which he, as a really wise man, is bound to live, so that he may thereby attain unfailingly the supreme salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. Accordingly, the relation between the preceptor and the disciple has to be such as makes the disciple always show sincere reverence to his master and feel spontaneously grateful to him, as also enables him at the same time

to maintain well his own individuality of conviction by making him take care to see that all that he learns from the master is really in harmonious agreement with his own enlightened reason and exalted spiritual aspirations.

The second of the two stanzas, that we are now considering, tells us what that wisdom is—that wisdom, which the seer, who has seen the truth, will teach to such disciples as are in earnest and are also full of reverence and gratitude to him on account of the inestimable good, which he, through his teaching, so very kindly bestows on them. Please observe that Arjuna was told, in this connection, that, by obtaining this wisdom, he would not again get into any sort of delusion. The delusion, which is specially referred to here, is that, which led Arjuna to say emphatically to Śrī-Kṛishṇa on the great battlefield of *Kurukshētra* at the crisis of commencing a great war—"I will not fight". The compassion, kindled in him by his love of his own relations and friends, made him forget for the moment his duty to society as a famous Kshattriya prince and mighty warrior. This desire to run away from the hard and trying post of duty arose in him, as you all know now so well, really out of his having seriously mistaken the impermanent for the permanent, the unreal for the real. If only Arjuna had judged his duty in the situation from the stand-point of the immortal soul and its high destiny of unlimited light and freedom, considerations of personal attachment and family-relation could not have blinded his spiritual vision to the extent of making him thoughtlessly ignore the imperative obligatoriness of his own larger duties in life as a chivalrous prince and ever victorious warrior. It is indeed to clear his mind of this delusion that Śrī-Kṛishṇa taught him the sublime lessons of wisdom contained in the *Gītā*. The wisdom, which the holy seers of truth teach to deserving disciples, has therefore to be such as will make it impossible for them to become deluded either in regard to the true purpose or in regard to the appropriate conduct of life. From all that we have been able to learn so far, it is evident that such wisdom is undoubtedly derivable from fully accomplished self-realisation. It is clearly in consequence of this, that we are told in this context that, with the aid of the wisdom learnt from the holy seers of truth, one in fact becomes actually able to see all beings in one's self first

and then in God as well. We are thus given to understand that the ultimate perfection of self-realisation consists in seeing all beings in one's self as well as in God, and that the appropriateness of the guidance of conduct consists in its complete consonance with such an all-comprehensive self-realisation leading on to an equally all-comprehensive God-realisation. These ideas are more fully worked out and explained in the sixth chapter of the *Gītā* ; and at the time of studying that chapter, we shall have necessarily to deal with them. Hence we need not now undertake any detailed examination of the nature of the self-realisation and God-realisation, which enable the holy seer to see the truth well and thereafter become appropriately the blessed teacher of divine wisdom to others. There, as we shall see, the subject of self-realisation and God-realisation are both dealt with as arising out of the practice of *yōga*. And what we have to understand here is that that wisdom, wherein all work in its entirety is bound to culminate, is indeed no other than what the successful *yōgin* obtains and joyously enshrines in his heart as the most valuable result of his earnest and effective endeavour to attain both self-realisation and God-realisation. The statement, that all work culminates in wisdom, cannot, as you know, be interpreted to mean that the true end and aim of life is mere thought or any kind of passive mental meditation. The wisdom, that is derived out of the actual realisation of the soul and of God, cannot make the life of man become devoid of all active purpose. On the other hand, what it will certainly do is to make all the activities of life subserve the supreme purpose of the attainment of what constitutes the true *summum bonum* of life. Hence it fixes the goal of conduct and gives to it an ever watchful guidance, so as to make sure that it does not miss that goal. Moreover, we have to bear in mind that the experiences, which accrue to us from an active life, are in themselves, except in very rare cases, quite well calculated to point out to us the true goal of life as well as the manner of unfailingly reaching that goal. It is of course very possible for all of us to misunderstand the meaning of our experiences, and thus take away from them all their potency to teach to us real and lasting wisdom. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that one's own personal experience is ever a more potent teacher of wisdom to one than any outside advice or warning. There is further the fact, that the earnest living of the righteous life always leads, as a matter of course, to the

realisation of the great value and worthiness of the noble quality of righteousness. Indeed if our philosophy of the conduct of life is at all well thought out, there is certainly bound to be in it a true reciprocity of relationship between right work and real wisdom. No work, which is not based on and guided by real wisdom, can be assuredly right. Similarly, no wisdom, which is not really able to control and guide conduct aright, can be unfailingly true. Accordingly, you will see at once that the wisdom, which flows out of self-realisation and God-realisation, is true, in as much as it is well calculated to direct, control and guide conduct aright; and that the conduct, which is based on and guided by such wisdom is right, in as much as it is equally well calculated to lead men on to the blissful goal of self-realisation and God-realisation. Such I understand to be the full significance of these two stanzas: and the next stanza tells us how great a purifier of life true wisdom really is. It runs thus—

अपि चेदसि पापेभ्यः सर्वेभ्यः पापकृत्तमः ।
सर्वं ज्ञानप्लवेनैव वृजिनं सन्तरिष्यसि ॥ ३६ ॥

36. Even though you are the greatest sinner among all those, who are sinful, you will completely cross over all (your) sin, solely with the aid of the float of wisdom.

It must be evident to you all that, in this stanza, sin is conceived to be something like an immense ocean, which it is very difficult to cross over, but without crossing which the attainment of salvation is absolutely impossible. To cross over such an ocean of sin completely is to leave all sin behind, so as to become perfectly pure and well fitted for the achievement of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. This crossing over of the ocean of sin is here declared to become possible solely with the aid of the float of wisdom. In other words, without the float of wisdom, no one can be free from the great danger of getting drowned in the ocean of sin, and of being thus compelled to miss altogether the supreme bliss of everlasting life. We have already seen that the wisdom which can ferry a man over from this shore of sinful mundane life to the other shore of soul-salvation and God-attainment, is a valuable treasure possessed by all

holy seers of truth, and that the acquisition of that wisdom is capable of making the aspirant after salvation realise all beings in himself and himself and all the other beings in God. You know that the truth, by seeing which these holy seers come to be in possession of this valuable wisdom, is none other than the great truth, which is derivable from self-realisation and God realisation; and both these realisations are possible to all those *yōgins* who are successful in adequately accomplishing, through the attainment of *samādhi*, the fruition of their spiritually aimed practice of *yōga*. One of the *ślōkas* in this context, which we are going to take into consideration in our next *Gītā* class, distinctly informs us that this sin-curing wisdom has to be ultimately derived from the realisations which are the result of the successful practice of *yōga*. How then does this wisdom, which is known to result from self-realisation and God-realisation, enable one to become free from sin? To know this well, we have to bear in mind what meaning we have to attach to sin. You may remember my having once before drawn your attention to what we have to understand by sin, in accordance with the commonly accepted doctrines of the *Vēdānta*. Sin or *pāpa* is exactly the same as what we have so often spoken of as the evil taint of *karma*—the taint which compels the soul to be in bondage and prevents it from enjoying its own natural blissfulness and freedom from imposed limitations. And you all know further that such a taint of *karma* arises inevitably out of the unrestrained life of sensuality and selfishness. Understood in this way, sin may well be made out to be a very strong impediment in the way of man winning his everlasting life through soul-emancipation and the consequent God-attainment. Let us not forget that the wisdom which the holy seers of truth teach to us is such as enables us to see all beings in ourselves and ourselves and all the other beings in God. In other words, with the help of this wisdom we come to see distinctly that we live and move and have our being in God, and that all the other beings in the universe also live and move and have their being in God. From this knowledge there arises quite naturally the sense of absolute equality between us and all the other beings in the universe, leading us as a matter of course to the recognition of the obligatoriness on our part of the life of love and service. Seeing that the life of love and service is by nature incompatible with the life of sensuality and selfishness,

we make out at once that the wisdom, which enforces the living of the former kind of life, is certain to deal the deathblow to the latter kind of life. Indeed nothing kills selfishness like love: and there can be no love without self-restraint, self-sacrifice and disinterested service. The wisdom which impels a man to live spontaneously that life of *samatva*, which is based on love and service, cannot but undermine his tendency in favour of selfishness; and we know that, when all selfish desires take their final departure from the heart of man, he immediately becomes an emancipated being worthy to enjoy all the high and heavenly privileges of a blessed and everlasting life in God. It is therefore no wonder at all that this wisdom is said to be capable of purifying even the greatest sinner so completely as to make him worthy of immortality and God-attainment. Nor is it any wonder that nothing other than this wisdom is considered to be capable of purifying the sinner so well and of fitting him so fully for the attainment of the everlasting salvation of his immortal soul.

XXIV

I remember that we were dealing in our last class with the very important question of how the moral wisdom-winning-sacrifice (*jñānayajña*) is superior to the material-offering-sacrifice (*dravya-yajña*), and how all work (*karma*) has necessarily to culminate in wisdom (*jñāna*). We saw then that this supreme wisdom has to be learnt always from holy seers and sages, who gladly teach it to all really capable and deserving disciples, and that its characteristic excellence consists in its really remarkable power to enable us to see firstly all beings in ourselves and then to see ourselves and all other beings in God. It is this realisation of all beings in one's self and the further realisation of one's self and all other beings in God, which together constitute the very essence of the wisdom wherein all work has necessarily to culminate. I am sure I need not tell you that it is quite as true to say that we are the creatures of our *karma* as that our *karma* is ever the creature of our thoughts. Wise thoughts have to be the impellers of all righteous work, even as the righteous life has to be the inevitable pre-requisite for the attainment of true wisdom. Moreover, *karma* in itself can neither cling to man as a 'binding' taint, nor prove of itself an unfailing source of soul-salvation. Work unaided by wisdom may well create an unending

bondage for the soul, so as to keep off its salvation indefinitely. But true wisdom will so determine the character and aim of human work, as to make it morally faultless and spiritually effective in making men and women move on to the goal of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. Hence it is that the purificatory power of wisdom has been declared to be so very great. Though it is through work that wisdom has to fit men for the attainment of salvation, still it is wisdom alone which can free their hearts from all selfish cravings and make their work in life altogether pure and unselfish. We have been accordingly told that the wisdom, which enables a man to see all beings in himself as well as in God, possesses the power of making him get rid of all his sin, even though he happens to be the worst among all sinners. With the aid of the wisdom-float, even the worst sinner may cross over the ocean of his sins;—that is how the *Gītā* describes the largeness of the purifying powor of true wisdom. How completely effective this power of purification is, which is possessed by the wisdom that arises from self-realisation and God-realisation, is pointed out in the stanza with which we begin our work to-day.

यथैधांसि समिद्धोऽग्निर्भस्मसात् कुरुतेऽर्जुन ।
ज्ञानाग्निः सर्वकर्माणि भस्मसात् कुरुते तथा ॥ ३७ ॥

37. In the manner in which a well kindled fire burns (all) fuel into ashes, in that (same) manner, O Arjuna, the fire of wisdom burns all *karma* into ashes.

The important point to be noted here is the comparison between wisdom and the kindled fire. This comparison clearly indicates that the wisdom mentioned here is not such as may be derived from mere book knowledge or from mere *vākya-jñāna* as they put it in Sanskrit: indeed it cannot at all be any wisdom which is likely to be obtained from any knowledge that rests solely upon the satisfaction of the intellect. It must be obviously reasonable to maintain that the innate imprint of our pre-natal tendencies due to accumulated *karma* cannot be wiped away by the mere operation of the intellect. Hence the wisdom that can convert all *karma* into ashes has to be derived from a direct and full personal realisation of the great truth that all

beings in the universe are in every one of us, and that at the same time every one of us and all the beings in the universe are in God. The idea evidently is that one ought to possess such a direct and complete personal realisation of this important truth, as is ordinarily observed to be possible in relation, for instance, to the perception of a thing that one holds in one's own hands. It is the brilliant self-luminosity of the well kindled fire of wisdom that successfully overpowers the darkness of innate ignorance, even as it is ordinarily the heat of the kindled physical fire which converts all fuel into ashes. Such a thorough transformation of the inner nature of man, as will destroy completely the effect of all accumulated *karma* in relation to him, is impossible of accomplishment otherwise. When a well kindled fire burns all fuel into ashes, it obviously means that the process of burning has been quite complete, and that there is no more of anything combustible which at all remains unreduced into ashes. Accordingly, when the fire of wisdom converts all *karma* into ashes, it means that no trace of it remains undestroyed, and that therefore all the forces giving rise to the bondage of the soul have all been successfully overcome and made entirely powerless for producing any mischief. That such is the nature and such the capability of this wisdom is further emphasised in the next stanza.

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।
तत् स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥ ३८ ॥

38. Indeed there is here no purifier similar unto wisdom. He, who has succeeded well in (the practice of) *yōga*, obtains that (wisdom) of himself in (due) time in himself.

The first half of this *ślōka* clearly tells us that the purifying power of the wisdom, which can at once burn all *karma* into ashes, is quite unique: we may even interpret it to mean that this power of completely purifying the soul from the stain of sinful *karma* belongs exclusively to the wisdom, by which the aspirant is enabled to see all beings in himself and himself and all beings in God. The entire obliteration of the impressed *samskāra* of *karma* is surely never very easily accomplished. Such an obliteration is not possible without a

radical change in the mental and moral tendencies belonging to the very nature of the aspirant: and this sort of change is here conceived to be a necessary consequence of the successful practice of *yōga*. That is evidently why we are told here that he, who has succeeded well in the practice of *yōga*, obtains of himself and also in himself that wisdom, which is capable of completely obliterating the innate impress of all his accumulated *karma*. The *Gītā* is, as you know, quite emphatic in declaring that he, who succeeds well in the practice of *yōga*, obtains self-realisation and God-realisation as the most precious reward of his *yōgic* success. Moreover, true self-realisation ought very rightly to enable the successful *yōgin* to see all beings in himself. Similarly, true God-realisation ought to enable him to see himself and all beings in God. In his case, therefore, the wisdom of seeing all beings in himself and himself and all beings in God happens to be the natural outcome of his own success in the practice of *yōga*. That is the reason why he obtains this wisdom without any outside aid, wholly of himself and in himself. In other words, he does not owe this wisdom of his to any teaching kindly bestowed on him by any great and holy seer of truth; for, by the very fulness and reality of his success in the practice of *yōga*, he has himself become a holy seer of truth. The very fact of his having thus become a holy seer of truth makes it necessary that the wisdom, which is the result of his blessed spiritual vision, should form an inevitable intrinsic element in the composition of his newly enlightened mental and moral nature. It is in this manner that he happens to find this sin-curing wisdom arising within himself. Consequently we can have no doubt at all as to the exact nature of this wisdom. It is further worthy of note here that this wisdom is declared to come only in due time even to him, who has succeeded well in the practice of *yōga*. In a future chapter (VII. 3) we shall see it stated that, out of thousands of persons who may actually practice *yōga*, only some one attains success, and that even among those, who so rarely succeed in their *yōgic* endeavour, only some one comes to know God truly. This evidently means that God-realisation does not come to the *yōgin* immediately and as a matter of course after the attainment of *samādhi* in the practice of *yōga*. Further perseverance seems to be needed on his part to enable him to arrive at the true knowledge of God: and without God-realisation the wisdom of seeing all beings in one's self and

one's self and all beings in God is of course impossible of attainment. This is in all probability the reason why it is said that this wisdom comes only in due time even to him who has succeeded well in the practice of *yōga*.

Can wisdom of this kind be teachable? In fact it must be teachable. Otherwise, how will holy seers of truth be able, as we are told here, to teach it to their earnest and faithful disciples? He, who does not, for instance, know the theory of the telescope, may well be taught how to put to use practically that interesting optical instrument for seeing such distant objects as cannot be seen by him without its aid. In the same way, he, who does not know how to realise for himself the nature of the truth, which underlies the wisdom that destroys *karma* completely,—he also may be taught well enough how to endeavour to live the life that is in accordance with the precepts of that wisdom. What people like us—who are not successful *yōgins* ourselves—require is a truly wise rule of conduct, by which we may practically manage to live the sinless life: and such a rule, if based on truth, becomes, as I have told you more than once already, its own proof in course of time. A sufficiently long use of the telescope is in itself enough to enable the person, who has been using it practically, to make out that the instrument is undoubtedly a revealer of distant objects. In the same manner the practical conduct of life, in accordance with the precepts of the wisdom that is well based upon truth, is certain in course of time to enable every earnest liver of such a life to make out for himself the full truthfulness of the truth on which the guiding wisdom of his own life is systematically made to rest. Therefore, although we cannot all of us become holy seers of the truth ourselves, it is surely possible for most of us to guide our lives in accordance with that wisdom, which the holy seers of truth obtain for themselves and for the good of their disciples from their own inner illumination and informing spiritual vision. Thus it is indeed a great blessing and a noble privilege to be the disciple of such a holy seer of truth, in as much as his benevolent gift of wisdom to his disciple is undeniably the most precious among the gifts that man can make to man.

श्रद्धावाँल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्परः संयतेन्द्रियः ।
ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ३९ ॥

39. He obtains wisdom, who holds it to be supreme, and is possessed of faith, and has the senses under control. Not long after obtaining wisdom, (he) reaches surpassing peace.

In this stanza we are given firstly the qualifications of the disciple, to whom the holy seer's gift of wisdom is calculated to do good. And secondly we are informed here of the nature of the good, which results to him from this wisdom, of which he happens to be the fortunate recipient. Three things are here held to be needed on the part of the good disciple, who seeks wisdom in earnest from the holy seer. One of these is that that disciple has to look upon it as a great possession of supreme value and importance. Otherwise, he is apt not to seek it, and may even discard it as not wanted to serve as an aid to the appropriate conduct of life. Another thing, which is required of him, is that he should be a man of faith. Please understand by this that he should have faith not only in the teacher—the holy seer of truth—as a person that is indeed well worthy to be entirely depended upon as his friend, philosopher and guide, but also in the reality of the entities known as soul and God, from the direct personal realisation of which alone the teacher himself has had to acquire that wisdom, which he, out of his spontaneous love and kindness, bestows on his worthy disciples. None of us can learn anything that is good or true or valuable from any one, in whose insight and earnestness and sincerity we have no real faith. Similarly, none of us will at all seriously endeavour to learn from any teacher anything, which does not really appeal to our hearts as being good and true and beautiful. In this manner the faith of the worthy disciple must necessarily have a twofold aspect. In addition to such faith, the third thing which is required of the worthy disciple is the power to keep the senses under control. You know how the wisdom of seeing all beings in one's self and one's self and all beings in God has quite naturally to exhibit itself in the form of the practice of *samatva* or the principle of universal equality in life, whereby we

happen to suffer from sorrow on account of the sorrows of others and feel joyous at heart on account of the joys of others, as though these others were not different beings from ourselves. The man, who has not his senses under control, and has not thus got out of the power of the common craving for pleasure,—such a man cannot at all manage to live well this life of *samatva*. He may hold in high esteem the wisdom that the holy seers of truth kindly teach to him, and he may also have faith in abundance in such teachers and in the genuine worthiness of the wisdom which they teach. Nevertheless, if he cannot keep his senses under control, the imparting of the holy seer's wisdom to him will prove to be all in vain, as he cannot at all put that wisdom into actual practice in his own daily life without the power of sense-control at his command. Consequently this third requisite is needed to make the imparted gift of wisdom fructify well in the life of its fortunate recipient. When, however, the wisdom imparted by the seer is properly received and put to use so as to make it bear its natural fruit in life, then the fortunate recipient of that wisdom attains surely the supreme bliss of surpassing peace. This means, I believe, that he becomes thereby the possessor of an exalted sense of happy inward peacefulness, which enables his mind to be wholly free from all worldly anxieties and disturbances. And it is with the aid of this spiritual bliss of serene and imperturbable peace that he learns to realise in practice the truthfulness and the trustworthiness of the great wisdom of seeing all beings in himself and himself and all beings in God. As a matter of fact it is by means of this blessed peace itself that this wisdom happens to be justified by its fruit. Even those, who cannot realise the truth for themselves by their own unaided efforts, are often in this world enabled, with the aid of faith and hope, to obtain the blessing that comes to all out of the transfiguring glory of the vision of truth. It is the possibility of being so blessed with the vision of truth, which makes life worth living to so many of us, and takes away from us the pessimistic sense of forlorn weakness and incurable despondency. It is further worthy of note here that, in the case of the appropriately qualified disciple, seeking wisdom from a holy seer, who has himself seen the truth, this supreme bliss of surpassing peace comes not long after the acquisition of the precious treasure of wisdom. From this we have to gather that the appropriately qualified disciple is, as a matter of

course, impelled to put into immediate practice the wisdom, that he acquires from the teachings, which, out of his own great kindness, the holy seer of truth bestows upon him. And it is, as you know, such a practical application of such wisdom to life which saves from saddening despair and from irreparable ruin.

अज्ञश्चाश्रद्दधानश्च संशयात्मा विनश्यति ।
नायं लोकोऽस्ति न परो न सुखं संशयात्मनः ॥ ४० ॥

40. The man of doubting nature, being ignorant and unbelieving, goes to ruin. To the man of doubting nature, this world is not; nor is there the (other superior world): (to him there is) no happiness.

By the man of doubting nature we have to understand a person with whom it has become an inveterate habit to doubt all things, so much so that his mind is actually in possession of no sort of certainty on which it may comfortably repose. Obviously the doubt, here referred to, relates to the wisdom, which is derivable from the successful *yōgin's* self-realisation and God-realisation, and enables all such persons as are blessed with it to see all beings in themselves and themselves and all beings in God. Traced to its source, the doubt of the doubter here appertains to the reality of the soul and of God. It is thus the basis of the sceptic attitude of unbelief in relation to two the greatest problems of philosophy. So, it is no common doubt of the ordinary or secular kind that is dealt with in this stanza. Consequently we need not feel surprised that the habitual doubter in regard to these great problems of God and soul is spoken of here as a person who is ignorant and unbelieving. The Sanskrit word *ajñāna*, which corresponds to 'ignorance' in English, is generally understood to signify the absence of knowledge, the opposite of knowledge, or wrong or perverse knowledge: and that ignorance of the unbelieving man, which is specially referred to as such in this stanza, consists, as I incline to understand it, of perverse knowledge. His unbelief also is of course in relation to the same great problems of God and the soul. What is evidently intended to be taught here is that he, who doubts the reality of God as well as of the soul, possibly on the ground that their existence cannot be proved to the

satisfaction of his own reason and alert intelligence, is undoubtedly ignorant and wanting in faith. In so far as the problem of God is concerned, it comes to very much the same as saying that, although no man has seen God at any time, it is undeniably the fool who says in his heart that there is no God. Most foolish doubters of this description are ignorant and unbelieving, for the reason that they cannot adequately distinguish between the function of reason and the function of faith in enabling us to obtain the knowledge of truth. It is perhaps not always very easy to distinguish between what a man sees with the eye of reason and what he sees with the eye of faith. Nevertheless we have to learn the distinction between them. They say that reason deals exclusively with such things as fall within the range of ordinary human experience in so far as it is determined by the psychology of sense-perception. If we bear in mind the distinction which they make in European philosophy between the phenomenon and the noumenon as they call them, then we may say rightly enough that it is the world of phenomena which forms the proper sphere for the operation of reason. In other words we may say that reason deals with whatever happens to be within the compass of nature; it cannot transcend nature. Consequently, what may be called the logic of reason cannot of itself take us from nature to nature's God, who, to be God at all, has obviously to transcend nature so as to be quite above and beyond it. In the endeavour to rise from nature to nature's God, we inevitably find the upward flight of our vigilant reason stopped suddenly by an insurmountable barrier. If reason cannot see beyond the limited province of phenomena, if it cannot pierce into the mystery of what there is beyond on the other side of the barrier which arrests its ambitious progress, it need not of course imply that man cannot at all rise rationally from nature to nature's God. Howsoever learned and full of well ordered knowledge a man may be, if he gives to his reason, which cannot at all transcend nature, the final voice in deciding the metaphysical reality or unreality of things above and beyond nature, he is there distinctly misusing his reason by making it perform a function for which faith alone is properly fitted. This same idea is sometimes expressed in another way by saying that, while the function of reason is simply to co-ordinate the contents of knowledge, the function of faith is to make knowledge mount up in secure certainty from the physical to

the metaphyscial. By faith I do not of course mean that blind and unenquiring credulity of the man of superstition, by which he is led to believe in the truth and rationality of even such things as are easily shown to be untrue and irrational. On the other hand I take faith to be that spontaneously informing instrument of knowledge, which, through intuition and other such innate psychical faculties and mental tendencies, makes it possible for us to so rise from nature to nature's God as to become well assured of His proved reality constituting the basis of our own reality as well as of the reality of every thing else which really exists in the universe. The unbelieving man is obviously devoid of this informing instrument of knowledge; and all high problems of philosophy are therefore apt to be studied by him in the insufficient and imperfect light of empirical reason. Therefore, whatever his frail reason cannot see, that he is apt to deny or at least to doubt. Hence, there can be nothing strange or inappropriate in our characterising as perverse the kind of knowledge, which such a man may possess in regard to the supra-natural problems of metaphysics. To him there is nothing worthy to be called knowledge, which his own limted reason cannot see, for he is so very sure about the comprehensive and faultless character of the revealing power of what happens to be merely his regulating reason. Still I cannot say, whether it is the perversity of his knowledge that is responsible for his unbelief, or whether it is his unbelief that is responsible for the perversity of his knowledge. They both seem to act and react upon each other. Anyhow it is certain that the man, who is of doubting nature, has necessarily to be both ignorant and unbelieving. The perversity of his knowledge and his want of faith in the supersensuous realities together constitute the basic support of his habit to be ever in doubt.

Since this sort of doubt in relation to the reality of the soul and of God is likely to undermine the very foundations of morality by tending to cause the annihilation of the rationality of righteousness, it is inevitable that the unfortunate man who is accustomed to be always actuated by such unworthy doubt should go to ruin in the end. So long as the appropriately active living of the absolutely unselfish and unswervingly righteous life happens to be the only true means by which it becomes possible for any man to save his own soul from ruin, and

so long as the loss of the soul implies much more than even the loss of all things, it cannot but be true that the man of doubting nature loses altogether that great acquisition, which constitutes the highest good and also the supreme object of life. It is quite self-evident that he, who has no faith in the reality of the soul and of God, will seek neither God-attainment nor soul-salvation: and these things are not won without seeking them, although it is not at all unimportant to remember that they are not won as a matter of course by all those who seek them. Moreover it is said here that to the man of doubting nature even this world is not. I understand that this evidently means that the loss of this world is necessarily involved in the loss of the other world, inasmuch as the life that has to be lived in this world is intended to be only a preparation for the emancipated life of supreme bliss in the other world. To miss the attainment of this bliss of the other world is so to misdirect life here as to make it lose its aim completely. Let us, however, note further that even from the standpoint of mere worldly success, doubt is not conducive to sure or steady progress. Doubt generally gives rise to hesitancy; and hesitancy always makes action dilatory, indecisive and ineffective. The result of it all is that the man of doubting nature invariably loses all confidence in himself and begins to see signs of dark suspicion and vile insincerity everywhere around himself. A person of this description cannot easily command happiness here even from the standpoint of worldly success. To him, who cannot utilise well the advantages and opportunities, which the world affords, so as to attain genuine happiness therein, his life in the world can indeed be no better than if it were not: to such a man the world is always as good as non-existent. Since, as we have already seen, that kind of doubt, which is not open to correction and is firmly inclined to be markedly in favour of philosophic and religious negation, is certain to undermine all faith in all higher spiritual realisations and in soul-salvation and God-attainment, the life of the man of doubting nature cannot but miss its supreme spiritual aim so as thereby to lose every chance of winning the divine happiness of immortal bliss and everlasting freedom in the ever-blessed world of emancipated souls. It is for this reason that this other world also is to him as good as if it were not. You know that, according to the religion and the philosophy of the *Vēdānta*, bliss, which is in Sanskrit called *ānanda*, is an essential element in

the very constitution of all our souls, so that, when they come to themselves and realise what their own pure and unalloyed nature is, they forthwith become infinitely happy in a manner which is unique and unparallelled. If doubt deprives a man of the power of attaining this kind of supreme bliss, it is more than abundantly proved that to the man of doubting nature there can be no real happiness at all. I find it unnecessary to tell you that the doubt, which is so emphatically condemned here, is not surely that doubt which serves as the necessary stepping stone to enquiry and conviction and faith. This kind of doubt is good and ought to be always welcomed, inasmuch as it makes faith firm and the attainment of true happiness positively certain.

योगसंन्यस्तकर्माणं ज्ञानसंछिन्नसंशयम् ।
आत्मवन्तं न कर्माणि निबध्नन्ति धनञ्जय ॥ ४१ ॥
तस्मादज्ञानसंभूतं हृत्स्थं ज्ञानासिनात्मनः ।
छित्त्वैनं संशयं योगमातिष्ठोत्तिष्ठ भारत ॥ ४२ ॥

41. O Arjuna, works do not bind him (in bondage), who has set aside (his) *karma* through *yōga*, whose doubts are cut asunder by means of wisdom, and who is (accordingly) in possession of (his own) soul.

42. Therefore, O Arjuna, cut off by means of the sword of wisdom this doubt appertaining to the soul—(the doubt) which is born of ignorance and is abiding within the heart: and do you thereafter become devoted in faith to *yōga* and rise up (to do your duty).

If doubt in regard to the immateriality and immortality of the soul leads to indulging in selfishness and the consequent ruin of one's own divine destiny, it must follow as a matter of course that the removal of such a doubt should be well calcutated to enable one to attain without fail the blessed and everlasting life of the enfranchised and illumined spirit. To believe in the reality of the soul seems to be in fact the only way in which people learn to discard the attractions of the life of the flesh and to seek the blissfulness of the life of the spirit. It is indeed invaluable wisdom to know that in the

case of no person the life of the flesh can ever be an end in itself, and that in the case of all beings life has a really higher purpose than the mere satisfaction of the senses and the appetites. We can none of us afford to forget the fact that the life of the body is really intended to serve as a means for the attainment of the final freedom and bliss of the soul. To doubt the reality of the soul and the supreme blessedness of its state of final freedom from all limitations cannot be consistent with any other ethical doctrine than what is unmixedly selfish or egoistic as they say. So long as the life of the body is not understood to be entirely subservient to the life of the spirit, there can be no rational basis for the inculcation of the noble moral lessons of service, self-sacrifice and love. The firmest foundation of all the noblest obligations of morality is undoubtedly metaphysical. The wisdom, whereby this fact is realised, is certain to cut asunder all doubt in regard to the reality of the soul and the unchangeable eternality of its luminous life of blissful freedom. And he, whose doubts are thus cut asunder by means of such wisdom,—how will he live his life? He has evidently to live a life, wherein—in the language of the *Gītā*—it becomes possible for him to lay aside all *karma* through *yōga*. By *karma* we have to understand in this context the tendency of works to produce the recurring bondage of the soul in material embodiments—that tendency which compels individual souls to be born again and again in various embodiments and environments, and also to die again and again so as to be unendingly re-born. It is only the effective avoidance of this ordinarily common tendency that makes it at all possible to prevent works from giving rise to the bondage of the soul. We have already learnt that the tendency of works to impose limitations upon the power and freedom of the soul is always due to our attachment to the fruits of our works, and that work without such attachment is really equivalent to 'no-work', and cannot therefore force the soul to get into any bondage of any sort. Thus the *yōga*, which helps us in laying aside *karma*, can be nothing other than what is implied in our appropriate performance of appropriate duties without any attachment whatsoever to the resulting fruits of works. In fact it is only in this way that the wisdom, whereby our doubt is sundered, can be put into practical use day after day in our lives, so as to make the attainment of the supreme bliss of soul-salvation both possible and easy.

It almost requires no explanation to see that he, whose doubt regarding the nature as well as the reality of the soul has been completely cut off, and who has further been able to overcome the binding influence and tainting tendency of works with the aid of a life of duty lived without attachment to the fruits of works,—he indeed happens to be in real possession of his own soul. This way of looking at the situation implies of course that every one, who has a soul, need not be assumed to be really in possession of it. Although it is quite true that all of us have souls, it is in no way less true that we do not know with sufficient certainty that we have souls, in the way in which the successful *yōgin* knows after self-realisation in *samādhi* that he has a soul. Let us suppose that a very rich man has a son born to him, and that unfortunately this son becomes extremely insane even when he is a mere boy. Is it possible for him at all to know well that, if he had not been so insane, he would naturally as the son of his father be in time the master of all the wealth owned by the father? The very rankness of his madness makes it impossible for him to know this well; hence his natural and legitimate potentiality to inherit the wealth of his father has become ineffective and remains altogether unrecognised by him. You may easily see that this sort of non-recognition cannot mean the same thing as the non-existence of such a potentiality in relation to him. The potentiality really exists; but it is nevertheless unrealised and unrecognised by him in whom it so exists. The situation is indeed very similar to this in regard to the relation between us and our souls. Although we have all souls, we do not really know that we have them, for the reason that our inner spiritual vision is very completely clouded by ignorance. And this ignorance, which in this manner hides our own souls from our view, can be removed only with the aid of that wisdom of self-realisation and God-realisation, which the *yōgin* obtains as the most precious reward of his successful practice of *yōga*. Whoever has this wisdom, he alone knows really well that he has a soul—whether his wisdom happens to be what he has realised for himself as a true *yōgin* or what has been imparted to him by a wise seer of truth, playing in relation to him the nobly benevolent part of an earnest and kindly guide and preceptor. In fact he, who is himself ignorant and has moreover no faith in the wisdom of the seer that has seen the truth,—he can never know that he has a soul in reality: for all practical purposes,

such a man behaves as if he had no soul. Therefore, it is in every way reasonable to declare that that man alone is really in possession of his own soul, who has destroyed completely all the doubt in his heart by means of the wisdom which flows from self-realisation and God-realisation, and who has moreover been able thereby to set at naught the binding influence and tainting tendencies of *karma* with the aid of the disinterested life of appropriate duty appropriately lived. If ever any man is really in possession of his own soul, he must undoubtedly be such a man.

You are sure to see that, so far, I have been trying to bring out, as well as I can, the full significance of the first of the two stanzas, which I read and translated to you just a little while ago. The second of those stanzas happens to be the last one in the chapter; and in it an earnest exhortation, based upon the natural conclusion of a well reasoned argument as given in the context here, is addressed to the faint-hearted and doubting Arjuna, calling upon him to rise to the occasion and to do his duty as an honourable soldier and chivalrous prince in the momentous conflicts of the great war that was almost immediately to commence. It certainly cannot but be quite superfluous on my part to tell you now that Arjuna's doubting faint-heartedness in the battle-field then was obviously due to his mistaking the *summum bonum* of life, to his looking upon mere mundane happiness and prosperity as constituting the highest good of life. It is this mistaken view of the main purpose of life that made his attachment to his relatives and friends stand in the way of the fulfilment of his duties as a chivalrous prince and heroic warrior. Selfish attachment to things and persons is in fact a necessary result of all those secular views of life, which, as such, do not consider its supreme purpose to be entirely spiritual and supra-mundane. Hence the argument used here to convince Arjuna of his error was naturally directed to dispel his wrong notion, that mundane considerations alone are fully competent to determine the nature of duty and its obligatoriness. Accordingly, self-realisation and God-realisation, as means for the final liberation of the immortal soul from the assuredly unwholesome necessity of becoming subject to limitations and to the unending recurrence of births and deaths in succession, are both shown to be things that are in every way worth striving for, in as much as they are capable of

giving rise to that wisdom which makes it impossible for any one, who has it, to mistake in any manner the ideal purpose of his own life as a human being. When the emancipation of the immortal soul from the bondage of matter is, through the aid of the wisdom which flows from self-realisation and God-realisation, understood to form the supreme purpose and the highest good of life, then all those persons, who so understand it, are very properly expected to put forth their very best endeavour to overcome the obstacles that may stand in the way of their attaining such an emancipation. And it is, as we know, the clinging of our *karma* to us, which happens to be the real obstacle that prevents the bound soul from attaining its emancipation and final freedom. The cause, in its turn, of this clinging of *karma* unto us is not that all of us are inevitably compelled to live the life of incessant work, but that we are all very prone to become selfishly attached to the fruits of whatever work we may have from time to time to do in life as our duty. To live the life of duty, without this sort of attachment, not only does not give rise to the clinging of *karma*, but also removes from us completely all such *karma* as may have been already made to cling to us. Not to have known all this, is the ignorance which was the true cause of the faint-heartedness and doubt that took hold of Arjuna at such a sublimely momentous crisis. And very naturally the only thing, with which doubt like this can be cut off and removed, is the wisdom which knows all these things—the wisdom which knows the reality of the soul and finds it to be in its essential nature an unlimited and self-luminous spirit—and understands at the same time the salvation of soul-emancipation to be the supreme purpose and the highest good of life. As soon as the sword of wisdom cuts off and removes the doubt in the heart of the sincere and earnest aspirant, he has, as we may all see at once, no other course open to him than to follow the active life of *yōga*, that is, the life of appropriate duty appropriately performed with no attachment whatsoever to the fruits of works. Hence Śrī-Kṛishṇa's exhortation to Arjuna here to rise up and to do his duty aright.

Thus ends the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā* with such an exhortation so addressed to Arjuna. Yāmunāchārya, who you know, is a well-known *Śrī-Vaishṇava* teacher of South India, has summarised the contents of this chapter thus :—

प्रसङ्गात् स्वस्वभावोक्तिः कर्मणोऽकर्मतास्य च ।
भेदा ज्ञानस्य माहात्म्यं चतुर्थाध्याय उच्यते ॥

According to this summary there is first of all, as arising out of the previous context, the statement of his own nature as God-man given by Śrī-Kṛishṇa. The next teaching of importance in this chapter relates to how 'work' may be made to become equivalent to 'no-work'; and in this same connection all the various forms of work, which may be declared to be really equivalent to 'no-work' are also pointed out very naturally. Then there is the description of the greatness of wisdom—of that wisdom which fully removes all doubt in relation to the reality of the soul and also its essential nature, and is thus helpful to the attainment of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. These are in fact the most important topics that are dealt with in this chapter. Let us now try to see what the connection between these various topics is, and how the teachings contained in this fourth chapter are related to those that are given in the third chapter. I am sure you remember well how, after the conclusion of the outline-statement of Śrī-Kṛishṇa's philosophy of conduct as given in the second chapter, the third chapter of the *Gītā* begins with a digression due to Arjuna's desire to have a doubt cleared,—the doubt being that, if, as he was taught, the disposition of the mind of the worker is really more important than the work itself in the determination of the rectitude and the sinlessness of conduct, then it is not at all easy to understand why any particular kind of duty should become incumbent upon any particular person in any particular situation. Indeed people may very well be allowed in accordance with this position to do only such duties as are pleasing and agreeable to them—duties in the performance of which there is neither harshness nor any cruelty according to their own views—provided their intentions are always absolutely pure and unsullied by selfishness. You are now well aware how this doubt of Arjuna in regard to the necessity of having to do even unpleasant duties was cleared by Śrī-Kṛishṇa, and how it was pointed out by this divine teacher to his privileged disciple that men have here really no such thing as an altogether unfettered freedom in the matter of the choice of their duties in life, and that their own nature and endowments and opportunities determine

for them what their proper duties in life have to be, very much more than most of them actually know or are willing to admit. Accordingly it was distinctly taught to Arjuna—as in a notable stanza (III. 35.) of the third chapter—that one's own duties, even if ill-performed, are better to one than another's duties well performed, and that it is good for one even to be discomfited, if need be, in the doing of one's own duties, in as much as the doing of other's duties by any one is almost always certain tc prove a painful cause of fear and fall. This notably non-optional character of duty and the great fact, that duty is very often determined in life by agencies and circumstances that are other than the free will of the worker, naturally led Arjuna to put a searching question to his teacher regarding the moral responsibility of the worker, whose will is not in this manner wholly free or absolutely unfettered in the matter of the choice of his own duties. If nature compels us to do what we do, and to live the kind of life that we live, then surely we cannot be held responsible for our life being morally either good and praise-worthy or bad and blame-worthy. Such is the logic underlying the question put by Arjuna regarding men's moral responsibility (III. 36.) for what they do in life; and the answer given to him is, as you know, that, when men sin, they do so not under the compulsion of nature but in response to the impulse of wishful desire. Therefore all those persons, who place themselves at the disposal of the promptings of their desires, and do all that they do in life in obedience to those promptings, are themselves wholly responsible for the moral praiseworthiness as well as blameworthiness of their own lives. After clearing in this mannei the disciple's doubts, Śrī-Kṛishṇa naturally proceeded to emphasise the importance of the doctrines taught by Him in relation to the philosophy of conduct, by drawing the attention of His disciple to their divine source and great antiquity and also to their unbroken traditional transmission through a famous line of great and noble teachers commencing with Himself. It is with a statement of things like these that the fourth chapter of the *Gītā* begins: and such a statement very naturally led Arjuna to enquire how his own contemporary companion Śrī-Kṛishṇa could have been the ancient and original divine promulgator of those traditional ethical doctrines,—those that have been embodied for our benefit in the *Bhagavadgītā*. It is in answer to this enquiry that Śrī-Kṛishṇa revealed His own nature as God-man to his friend and

disciple Arjuna, and explained to him the meaning and aim of the ever hallowing and ever beneficent process of divine incarnation, as it takes place universally everywhere and in all ages in almost all the great crises in history in the course of the onward march of mankind to that far off divine event to which the whole creation moves. From such well-establishable universality of the process of divine incarnation and from its ever beneficent aim, it must follow as a matter of course that all roads of religion and morality, which lead to the firm establishment of virtue and righteousness among mankind, are indeed laid out by God Himself and have God-attainment for their final goal of everlasting life and bliss.

After this fairly full explanation of the meaning and aim of divine incarnation, the thread relating to the naturally determinate character of men's duties in life and in society was, as you may all remember well, taken up again in an important stanza (IV. 13.), to the careful study of which we paid some special attention. This stanza declares that the division of people in society into classes and castes is natural and God-ordained, and is due to the fact of their functions in life having necessarily to vary in accordance with their innate endowments and natural qualifications. This obviously means the same thing as saying that it is the physical, mental and moral fitness of persons, which determines for them the broad outlines of their function and status in society, so as to make it more or less completely clear to them to which class or caste they have as a matter of necessity to belong. The *Gītā* is not altogether uncognisant of caste by birth: it, however, recognises it only to that extent, to which it has any bearing, through the recognised influence of heredity, upon caste by qualities,—these qualities themselves being those that determine for man his *dharma* or duty in life. Such duty, so determined, is rightly held to be always obligatory on him. The goodness of his mental disposition, howsoever excellent it may be in itself, can neither alter the particular character of his duty so determined, nor reduce its obligatoriness to the level of what may wholly be a matter of pure option. Nevertheless, the disposition of the mind of the doer of duty is always of supreme importance, in as much as it is that disposition which determines whether or not the internal impress of the worker's work clings to him so as to subject him to the bondage of *karma*. You

know how, as the *Īśāvāsyōpanishad* says, work in itself does not cling to man. Work in itself may therefore be either effective or ineffective as the source of the soul's mundane bondage. The effectiveness of any work in creating the bondage of *karma* for the soul is dependent wholly upon the selfishness of the motive with which that work is done; and when the motive of the worker happens to be entirely unselfish, his work is seen to be altogether powerless in creating for him such a bondage of the soul. When in this manner work turns out to be ineffective as the creator of bondage, it becomes equivalent to what has been called 'no-work'. It is in this way that, in the exposition of *karmayōga* as taught in the *Bhagavadgītā*, the question of the equivalence between 'work' and 'no-work' has had to be taken up for consideration; and we were, as you are aware, told in that context that he alone is truly possessed of intelligence among men, who sees 'work' in 'no-work' and 'no-work' in 'work'. Since the mental disposition, which truly effects the equivalence between 'work' and 'no-work', is that one, which is calculated to make the worker free from all selfish attachment to the fruits of work, it cannot but prove to be a matter of great importance to know how the active doer of duty may be made to acquire the requisite freedom from such attachment to the fruits of work. The means suggested here for the purpose of acquiring this quality of unselfishness has already been, as you know, referred to in the previous chapter (III. 9), and is hence merely an amplification of the well known dictum that only such work creates for man the bondage of *karma* as is not intended and utilised for the carrying out of divine worship. And all forms of divine worship are here conceived to be modifications of the universally typical form of the religious sacrifice. Thus another thread of the old argument is taken up for further consideration; and various material as well as moral forms of religious worship are declared to be equivalent to the typical sacrifice, evidently with the liberal intention of enabling every earnest enquirer to understand distinctly that there is in fact no work which is incapable of being transformed into divine worship. Indeed it is on this happily possible transformability of all work into worship that the equivalence between 'work' and 'no-work' is ultimately seen to rest. Therefore it is all the more necessary on our part to make out well that such transformability is no mere moral fiction, which is unfounded upon philosophic truth and unsupported by established reality.

It is mainly with a view to demonstrate this that the relation between work and wisdom was taken into consideration in the context; and you know how we have been taught that all work in its entirety culminates in wisdom in the end,—in that wisdom, which enables us to see all beings in ourselves and ourselves and all beings in God. In dealing with this wisdom, wherein all work has to culminate, the *Gītā* tells us that such wisdom is to be found in all those seers who have seen the truth, that it is capable of being taught by such seers to disciples who are in every way worthy and in earnest, that it has the power of completely purifying even the most sinful among sinners and is thus unequalled as a suitable means of moral cleansing and spiritual purification, and that it soon brings on in its train the transcendental bliss of the supreme peace which passeth all understanding. Such being the character and power and greatness of the wisdom, in which all work in its entirety has ultimately to culminate, it is quite natural and very proper for us to be told that only the man of faith is fitted to be blessed with that wisdom, and that with its aid all doubt may be destroyed and all action made powerless to produce the mundane bondage of *karma*. Hence came the call to Arjuna to win this wisdom, to wash off his ignorance and to overcome all his doubt, and then to do his duty in life so well and so appropriately as to deserve to be a fellow-worker with God in accomplishing His high purpose regarding universal creation and the fulfilment of the divine destiny of man therein. This is, as I conceive, a connected and condensed account of the contents of the fourth chapter; and I do not certainly know how far I have succeeded in presenting to you in this brief summary all the various topics dealt with in this important chapter in their true and natural relationship. However, you have been so long so good and kind to me that I am afraid I am almost beginning to become unaware of my many defects and deficiencies in performing this work of expounding the *Bhagavadgītā* in these classes. In our next class, we shall begin the study of the fifth chapter: and let me now assure you that I am very anxious to see that the continuance of your kindness to me does not give rise to any slackness of honest and earnest effort on my part in doing the duty which so many of you have so generously assigned to me to do.

XXV

CHAPTER V.

We now begin the study of the fifth chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā:* and this chapter also starts with a question which Arjuna put to Śrī-Kṛishṇa. After listening to Srī-Kṛishṇa so far, Arjuna evidently felt puzzled about what might be the one definite conclusion aimed at by the Master in His teachings relating to the most appropriate manner of guiding conduct in life. You may remember that we were told in the previous chapter that the most appropriate conduct is that wherein it becomes possible for us to see 'work' in 'no-work' and 'no-work' in 'work'. It must be in relation to this combined commendation of 'work' and 'no-work' that Arjuna felt puzzled, not knowing whether 'work' or 'no-work' is in fact the better of the two. Accordingly—

अर्जुन उवाच—

संन्यासं कर्मणां कृष्ण पुनर्योगं च शंससि ।
यच्छ्रेय एतयोरेकं तन्मे ब्रूहि सुनिश्चितम् ॥ १ ॥

ARJUNA SAID :—

1. O Kṛishṇa, you praise the giving up of works and also (their) adoption. Tell me that quite decidedly —which one of these two is the better.

Most of you know, I am sure, that, at the time when Arjuna was inclined to get away from the battle-field with a view to adopt the life of asceticism and renunciation, his mind must have been favourably inclined to the doctrine, which maintains freedom from the bondage of *karma* to be the result of absolute worklessness and inaction in life. Therefore he was naturally predisposed to understand *akarma* or 'no-work' to convey the idea of absolute worklessness and inaction: and so it is no wonder that he got puzzled, when both 'work' and 'no-work' were simultaneously commended and declared to be equally worthy of adoption at the same time. We must take care to see that the doubt, given expression to in this first stanza of the fifth chapter, is different from that other doubt, with which we dealt when going through the first stanza of the third chapter. The doubt

raised and dealt with in the third chapter appertains to the comparative importance of motive in relation to work in determining the righteousness or otherwise of conduct. When, after having been told that work in itself is far inferior to the disposition of the mind in the matter of making conduct righteous or unrighteous, Arjuna was called upon to kill in battle his friends and venerable teachers and kindly relatives, he could not understand clearly the obligatoriness of this kind of cruel and heartless work, and would not believe that the performance of such unpleasant work was really his duty. He was quite willing to make the disposition of his mind as perfectly faultless as possible, but wanted at the same time that, with such a disposition, he should be allowed to perform only that kind of work which was agreeable to him and was also in complete consonance with the tender promptings of his own benevolent heart. He had not as yet learnt that duty is duty, even though it is unpleasant, and had therefore to be told that the need for the faultlessly unselfish motive in the doing of duty could not give him any unrestricted freedom in the choice of his duty. Every man's duty is determined for him in life by his own endowments and qualifications, that is, by his own natural fitness for doing the duty: and it is required of him that he should do the duty, so determined for him, with a motive that is faultlessly pure and absolutely unselfish. The unselfishness of his motive and the determinate character of his duty need not disagree, as they can well be made to go together. The specially mentioned superiority of the disposition of the mind of the worker, in relation to the work that he does, is due to the fact that it is the motive behind the work, but not the work itself, which is responsible for the creation as well as the destruction of the bondage of *karma*. So we may see at once that the subject taken into consideration in the first stanza of the third chapter is very different from what is dealt with here in the first stanza of the fifth chapter. In this stanza we have the old question of the reconciliation between *pravṛitti* and *nivṛitti* raised once again—of the reconciliation between the life of active achievement and that of absolute renunciation. If we take it for granted that the strenuous life of active achievement has necessarily to be ever selfish and worldly, and that similarly the life of absolute renunciation has to be one of complete inaction and no achievement, then these two kinds of life become inevitably

incompatible with each other. Although the current experience of the world and our common conceptions regarding these two kinds of life —the life of *pravṛitti* and the life of *nivṛitti*—may well justify such an assumption of incompatibility, there is as a matter of fact no real incompatibility between them. This had been pointed out clearly to Arjuna; but he could not easily get rid of his confusion due to preconceived wrong notions regarding the life of *pravṛitti* and the life of *nivṛitti*, without further effort of thought on his own part and further help from Śrī-Kṛishṇa. In thus seeking to obtain more light and guidance from the Master, the disciple naturally asked Him to say definitely which is really the better—doing or not-doing—fighting bravely in the battles of the impending war, or retiring quietly from the great battlefield, leaving behind all its trials and responsibilities as well as all its temptations and alluring spoils. In the spirit of the true teacher, with great patience and sympathy and cheerfulness, Śrī-Kṛishṇa, as we may see, proceeded thereupon to clear this latest doubt of His dear disciple thus.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

संन्यासः कर्मयोगश्च निःश्रेयसकरावुभौ ।
तयोस्तु कर्मसंन्यासात् कर्मयोगो विशिष्यते ॥ २ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID:—

2. The renunciation (of work) and the adoption of work are both capable of yielding the highest good. But, of them, the adoption of work is superior to the renunciation of work.

Please observe that both *sannyāsa* and *karma-sannyāsa* are used in this *ślōka* in exactly the same sense. That is why I have translated both of them as 'the renunciation of work'. Now, that *sannyāsa*, which is the renouncing of works, cannot be different from *nivṛitti*, which is turning away from work and achievement. Therefore, it appears to me that it is not quite appropriate to make *karma-sannyāsa* here equivalent to *jñāna* and *sāṅkhya*, and then to interpret it as 'wisdom'. The renouncing of works may be conceived to be the direct logical consequence of the endeavour to put into practice the lessons of philosophy about the great problems of *karma*, of the soul, and of its salvation. Although anything like a complete renunciation

of works is practically impossible, still such a thing may, owing to its logical relation to those lessons, be made to represent that wisdom of philosophy of which it happens to be the direct consequence. To make the consequence represent the cause is not an unknown usage in language. Nevertheless, I am inclined to attach to the expression *karma-sannyāsa* here its natural and primary meaning, and to understand by it the life of inaction and no achievement. We have been told already that the life of absolute inaction is practically impossible and against the very nature of things. But this does not contradict the position that, if it were possible, it would be the shortest and the most direct way of accomplishing the required freedom from the bondage of *karma*. Though a complete renunciation of work is practically impossible, it is of course logically tenable as a mentally conceivable means for the attainment of the highest good of soul-salvation. This is probably the reason why both the renunciation and the adoption of the life of work are said to be capable of yielding to us the highest good. Moreover, it must have been very natural on the part of Śrī-Kṛishṇa to understand the language of Arjuna in the sense in which he used it; and according to him *karma-sannyāsa* evidently meant retiring from the battlefield and living the passive life of inaction and no achievement. Please note further that I have translated the word *niśśrēyasa* as 'the highest good'. I am of opinion that this translation brings out the true meaning of the word; and there can be no doubt that the highest good here thought of is *mōksha*, that is, the final deliverance of the soul from the necessity of having to go through the round of *samsāra*, by liberating it altogether from the bondage of *karma*. Accordingly, we are told in this *slōka* that, as a means for the attainment of *mōksha*, the life of inaction and no achievement might, if it were possible, prove as good as the life of work and achievement. Nevertheless, it must be true that, as a means for the attainment of this same highest good, the life of work is decidedly superior to the life of absolute inaction and no achievement. What is in any case logically the straightest and the shortest course need not therefore be practically the most expedient or the most convenient or the most readily available course: and we all know that it is utterly impossible for any of us to adopt the life of absolute inaction. We shall see that there are other reasons also to prefer the life of work to the life of inaction as a means of soul-salvation.

And the next *slōka* points out what kind of man may, under the prevailing circumstances of life, be truly considered to have effectively renounced all work.

ज्ञेयः स नित्यसंन्यासी यो न द्वेष्टि न काङ्क्षति ।
निर्द्वन्द्वो हि महाबाहो सुखं बन्धात् प्रमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

3. (He), who does not hate and is not impelled by desire,—he is to be understood as one that has for ever renounced (work). Indeed, O Arjuna, he is easily liberated from bondage, who is free from the (influence of the) pairs (of opposites).

Having mentioned in the previous stanza that—although the absolute renunciation and the ready adoption of work in life are indeed both capable of being looked upon as suitable means for the attainment of the salvation of soul-emancipation—the latter plan of adopting the life of work is superior to the former plan of renouncing work altogether in life, the question of how this superiority comes about is now taken up for consideration in this stanza. Whichever of these two kinds of life we may endeavour to live, liberation from the bondage of *karma* happens to be the one and the same end to be attained, in as much as, without winning such a liberation beforehand, the attainment of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment is impossible. Whether the life, that we live, does, or does not at all, create for us the bondage of *karma*, is not, as you are well aware, so largely dependent upon the work which we do in that life, as it is upon the disposition of the mind with which we do that work. You are sure to remember that we have been told already that work in itself is far inferior to the disposition of the mind, in regard to the creation or the non-creation of the bondage of *karma*. As between the work and the mental disposition with which it is done, the latter is of course the more potent factor in the matter of the creation as well as the destruction of the bondage of *karma*. That is why we are told here that he, who does not hate nor is impelled by desire, is the person that has in fact for ever renounced work. Please note that it is the compound word *nitya-sannyāsī*, which has been interpreted to mean a person who has for ever renounced work, *nitya* meaning 'always' and *sannyāsī* meaning a 'renouncer'. The translation

of *nitya* by 'for ever' is intended to convey not only the idea of 'for all time' but also the other implied idea of 'in all conditions'. In fact it is this latter meaning which is more immediately aimed at here in this stanza; and we have indeed to understand in this context that he, who does not at any time hate nor is at all impelled by desire, happens to be a deservedly perfect renouncer of all work at all times and in all conditions. Whether a man lives the active life of vigorous work or the passive one of inactive quietism, he deserves to be looked upon as a really perfect renouncer of works, only when his mind is not at all actuated either by hatred or by desire. Accordingly, it is clearly possible for one, who lives an active life of work, to be at the same time a perfect renouncer of works also, even as it is possible for another, who lives notably, a passive life of inactive quietism, to be no such renouncer of works at all. How this may be—we have been told already, as you know. Even absolute physical inactivity, when in association with a mind that is burning with passions and desires, cannot at all become equivalent to the truly telling 'no-work'. On the other hand, strenuous and incessant work, if performed without attachment to results, becomes equivalent to such 'no-work'. He, whose mind is not actuated either by hatred or by desire, and who is therefore quite above the influence of the pairs of opposites like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, and liking and aversion—such a person alone can live the life of active and strenuous work without any sort of attachment to the fruits of work. Moreover, it is in the case of such a person alone that even the inactive life of passive quietism can become really equivalent to the life of 'no-work'. It is thus clear that he, whose mind is not actuated either by hatred or by desire, can well be at all times and in all circumstances a true renouncer of works.

We see that accordingly there are two ways, in which it is really possible for a man to be a true renouncer of works. He may live a life of active and strenuous work without any attachment whatsoever to the fruits of work, and thus prove to be a true renouncer of all works. Or, he may live a life of inaction and passive quietism, making sure at the same time that his mind does not burn with passions and desires, and that he is above the influence of the pairs of opposites. In both these ways, he may prove to be a true renouncer of works. I understand that we are taught in this stanza here, that,

of these two ways, the way of work without attachment is the easier one for people to follow. To make a man's life entirely free from the bondage of *karma*, it is absolutely necessary that his life—of whatsoever kind it may be—should be made to become truly equivalent to the life of 'no-work'. This cannot of course be done without the aid of the appropriate disposition of the mind, that is, a disposition in which no tinge whatsoever of selfishness is allowed to remain. With a mind absolutely free from all selfish attachment, a man may liberate himself from the bondage of *karma*, whether he happens to live the life of active work or the life of passive inaction. Such being the case, we cannot, indeed, afford to forget the great fact that, while the life of work is common and natural in relation to all living beings, the life of absolute inaction is both unnatural and impossible. Even after obtaining well the power to command the requisite unselfishness, it cannot be wise on the part of any man to attempt to accomplish what is wholly unnatural and impossible. Regarding this, the *Gītā* has left us in no doubt whatever: it has distinctly told us that nature compels every born being to live the life of work, in as much as without work life itself would be impossible. Therefore, it is evident that to live the life of work and to endeavour to infil it with absolute unselfishness must be easier and more natural for man, than to live the impossible life of absolute inaction, which has also to be associated with absolute unselfishness. And he, who is free from the influence of the pairs of opposites, is evidently not prone to be selfish; because in his case the incentive to be selfish has become quite dead and wholly inoperative. Thus it is that he, who has become free from the influence of the tempting pairs of opposites, is easily liberated from the bondage of *karma*. Accordingly, it becomes clear at once how that actual life, wherein work is adopted, is really superior to the other merely conceivable life, wherein work has to be wholly renounced.

सांख्ययोगौ पृथग्बालाः प्रवदन्ति न पण्डिताः ।
एकमप्यास्थितः सम्यगुभयोर्विन्दते फलम् ॥ ४ ॥

4. Children declare that *sāṅkhya* and *yōga* are different; (but) those (persons), who are possessed of true wisdom, do not (say so). He, who adopts either (of these) well, obtains the fruit of both (of them).

I remember that the meaning of the words *sāṅkhya* and *yōga*, as used here, has already been explained in another context. We had to deal with these words in their present signification, when we were in our classes going through the second and the third chapters of the *Bhagavadgītā*. In contexts like this the word *sāṅkyha* invariably means speculative abstract thought, while the word *yōga* means the practical process of the application of such thought to actual life. These words respectively denote what we ordinarily understand by 'theory' and 'practice'. Please try to recollect how we were taught at the very commencement of the third chapter, that there is a two-fold position in this world in regard to the philosophy of conduct, namely, the position of the *sāṅkhyas*, which is determined by speculative and abstract philosophic thought, and the position of the *yōgins*, which is determined by the actual practice of concrete work in life and in society. Since both these positions or *nishṭhās*, as they have been called, are stand-points in relation to the determination of the nature of that form of conduct in life, which is well calculated to lead to the attainment of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-realisation, they very naturally indicate that it is quite possible to have two methods in *karma-yōga*—that is, they show the possibility of two ways in which the life of work may be lived by those who earnestly endeavour to attain the salvation of their souls. It is well to bear this distinctly in mind, as otherwise we are apt to confound what has been called *sāṅkhya* here—that is, the speculative and abstract philosophic *nishṭhā* in relation to conduct—with the theory of *karma-sannyāsa* or complete renunciation of works, as opposed to active *karma-yōga* or the willing adoption of the hard life of strenuous duty. Moreover, the fact that what is called *yōga* here in contrast with *sāṅkhya*,—that is, the practical *nishṭhā* of actual concrete work in life and in society, as contrasted with the purely theoretical abstract *nishṭhā* of philosophic speculation,—the fact, that this same *yōga* is said to be intimately related to *karma-yōga* (III. 3.), may appear to lend support to the hasty conclusion that the *sāṅkhya*, which is mentioned here as well as at the beginning of the third chapter, is the same as *karma-sannyāsa* or absolute renunciation of works. Such an identification of the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā* with *karma-sannyāsa* seems to me to be positively wrong; and I therefore take the liberty of warning you to guard yourselves against it. The *Gītā* is quite emphatic in telling

us that the life, wherein all work has to be absolutely renounced, is altogether unnatural and utterly impossible; and it tells us also that the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā* and the *yōga-nishṭhā* are both capable of being duly adopted in life by persons, who are suitably qualified for their appropriate adoption. That this is indeed so, will become evident to you by the time we finish the study of this fifth chapter of the *Gītā*.

Accordingly, in this stanza the words *sāṅkhya* and *yōga* indicate two aspects of the practical conduct of life, two ways in which the active course and current discipline of the life to be lived by men and women in this world may be appropriately adjusted. Of these the *sāṅkhya* position looks at conduct and examines it from the standpoint of philosophic speculation and abstract reasoning. According to this position, the chief object of the life of work—which is after all the only natural and possible life for all mankind—has to be the endeavour to realise for one's self the truth of the conclusions of abstract philosophic thought, as they bear upon the ever-important problem of conduct. From the exposition of this speculative *sāṅkhya* position, as given in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, we have been able to gather the following notable conclusions:—that the soul is immaterial, immutable and immortal, while the body is material, mutable and mortal; that the association of the soul with matter is due to *karma* and gives rise to limitations which restrain the freedom and lessen the power of the soul; that this *karma*, which cripples the power of the soul by bringing about its imprisonment in matter, is produced as well as maintained by selfish attachment and fond clinging to the pleasures of the senses and to the results of works; and that the enforcement of non-attachment in relation to these things gives rise to that *vairāgya* or dispassionate disinterestedness, which is capable of destroying the bondage of *karma*, so as to enable the soul to realise in full its own power and freedom and innate blissfulness. These conclusions of the speculative philosophic view of life naturally give great importance to the attainment of *vairāgya* as an appropriate means for the liberation of the soul from all its imposed restrictions and limitations. The *sāṅkhya* plan of operation for the attainment of such valuable *vairāgya* consists in the practice of *tapas* and *dhyāna*, that is, in the practice of austerities and meditation and mental concentration. In other words, the philosopher, who is desirous of

directly working out in life the conclusions of his philosophy, has to endeavour to become a person, whom we may appropriately call a *sthita-prajña*, that is, as you already know, a seer of steady wisdom. I am sure you all remember well the characteristics of the seer of steady wisdom, as those characteristics are all explained so fully in the second chapter of the *Gītā*. His aim is to see whether it is true that the soul is real and enduring, and whether it is indeed possible for the embodied soul to be completely free from all attachments and to live its own life of unlimited light and happy inborn blissfulness. For this purpose he undertakes the practice of austerities and meditation and mental concentration, and goes on persevering in the practice, till ultimately he becomes, as it were, dead to all sorts of external influences and is turned into an absolute *ātmārāma*—into a spiritual seer whose entire delight is in the realisation of his own soul, that is, in making his soul perceive itself, so that for the time being both this perceiving subject and the perceived object become unified within himself. The spiritual delight and peace and blissfulness of such an *ātmārāma* are evidently so marked and so very strong as to make it impossible for him to be tainted by any kind of base attachment to the pleasures of the senses or to the results of works. To him nothing in the outer world can be really so attractive as to make him selfish. He cannot be swayed by desires and aversions; and in his case the attainment of *vairāgya* has inevitably to be an already accomplished fact.

But this course of life according to the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā*, which is calculated to make one become a steady seer of wisdom or *sthita-prajña*, is not obviously suitable to be freely and fearlessly adopted by all. Just as the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā* is rightly intended for the philosopher, so is the *yōga-nishṭhā* intended for the guidance of the common practical man of the world. He too has to win *vairāgya*, as otherwise his life is certain to miss the final goal of soul-salvation. It is not given to all persons to succeed in the austere practice of meditation and mental concentration, so as to bring about the unification of the subject and the object within themselves. Nor can all persons succeed easily in the endeavour to win the supreme internal peace and joy of the true *ātmārāma*, whose whole delight is ever unmistakably centered in self-realisation and God-realisation. There can surely be no doubt as to the possibility of the seer of steady

wisdom and spiritual delight living any kind of life with absolute unselfishness. Since *vairāgya* happens to be the very breath of his life, so to say, he is certain to feel like fish out of water, when he is in any manner forced to live in an atmosphere of selfishness. The common practical man of the world can also, as we know, win *vairāgya*, if he lives well the life that happens to be his portion, taking care to see that his own strong and unfailing faith in God enables him to feel fully convinced that all that he does in life is indeed done by him in the way of worshipping his God, who is always and in all situations his great Lord and Master. You may remember further that we have been told that the common practical worker in the world may prevent his life from becoming tainted with selfishness and bound in the bonds of *karma*, by realising that, in relation to all that he does in life, it is impossible in the very nature of things for him to be the ultimate and truly responsible worker, and that he cannot therefore have any valid title to own and to enjoy the fruits of his work as his own. He may see that all power in the universe comes from God, and that his own power to do and to achieve is hence in reality the power of God. Or he may make nature entirely responsible for all the activities of his life, and thus dispossess the soul of the attribute of agency in relation to his own work in life. In either of these ways he may manage to kill the selfish ideas of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* so as to come into full possession of the noble feeling of *vairāgya*. Whichever of these happens to be the means adopted, by the practical man of the ordinary life of work, for the attainment of unselfishness and complete non-attachment to the fruits of work, it is necessary that his life must be uniformly employed in the doing of those duties which fall to him in accordance with the peculiarities of his natural endowment and the conditions of his social environment. In other words, the life that has to be properly guided and lived according to *yōga-nishṭhā* cannot in any way be peculiar: it must be in its outer form like the ordinary life of men and women in society as ordinarily lived. But the philosopher's life of *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā* has necessarily to be peculiar and uncommon, in as much as the aim of such a life is to make the liver thereof a true seer of steady wisdom. The life of austerities and meditation and mental concentration is undeniably helpful in freeing men from the bondage of *karma*, and enabling them to obtain the salvation of soul-emancipation and

God-attainment. But such a life is only for the few elites. Accordingly, it is the easier stand-point of *yōga-nishṭhā*, which shows for the majority of mankind the way they have to travel along to reach the holy goal of the divine pilgrimage of life.

Such being the nature of *sāṅkhya* and *yōga* as understood in this context, it is no wonder at all that it is mentioned here that only children declare that *sāṅkhya* and *yōga* are different, and that wise and learned people declare, on the contrary, that they are both the same, for the reason that, if rightly chosen and suitably adopted, they both lead to the same goal. This one goal is the attainment of soul-salvation and God-realisation, through the acquisition of *vairāgya*, which is always a requisite means for that end. That the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā* is well calculated to lead the appropriately qualified aspirant directly to this goal of soul-salvation and God-realisation, must be evident to you all from what you have already learnt regarding the nature of this *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā*. And in the course of our study of this chapter, we shall learn more about it, which will surely go to show how well it is capable of leading the earnest aspirant to the goal of soul-salvation and God-attainment. Obviously the statement, that he, who adopts either *sāṅkhya* or *yōga* well, obtains the fruit of both of them, means really something more than that both of them are well able to lead all worthy aspirants on to the same goal of soul-salvation and God-attainment. The idea implied seems to refer evidently to the natural relation which ought properly to exist between true theory and appropriate practice. At the time of concluding our study of the second chapter of the *Gītā*, I remember to have dealt at some length with the nature of this relation, and to have pointed out to you that what is taken to be correct practice must be capable of being readily demonstrated to be such, with the aid of what happens to be the true theory, and that what is held to be the true theory must be capable of being actually realised to be true, with the aid of the correct practice that is conformably related thereto. Please allow me to illustrate my meaning by means of an analogy. Let us take two telegraph signallers, each of whom is given what they call a 'Morse Instrument' to transmit messages with: and let us suppose that one of them knows the theory of the instrument well, while the other knows only how to put the instrument to its practical use. You can

easily see that to the trained electrician, who knows the theory of this signalling instrument well, it cannot at all be hard to understand the manner of its practical use and to put it, after due practice, to such use with unerring accuracy. Similarly, in the case of the other signaller, who is in no serious sense a trained electrician but has learnt only empirically the art of signalling, the knowledge of the theory of the instrument in all its completeness cannot be said to be unattainable so long as he has an inquisitive and intelligent mind. Indeed his practical knowledge of the use of the instrument may well create in him the curiosity that will lead him on step by step to investigate the whole science of electricity, so as to make him also become in time a trained electrician. In the manner in which theory and practice are seen to be related to each other here, in that same manner are *sāṅkhya* and *yōga* related to each other in the great field of study and thought to which we give the significant name of the philosophy of conduct. Consequently, even as the adoption of the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā* makes it possible for the sage of steady wisdom to live the ordinary life of labour and effort in society with absolute non-attachment to the results of works, even so the adoption of the *yōga-nishṭhā* may make the earnest, aspiring and unselfish practical man of the world come by the realisations of the philosopher regarding the world, the soul and God. Thus the adoption of the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā* may give rise to its own results as well as to the results of the adoption of the *yōga-nishṭhā*; and in the same way the adoption of the *yōga-nishṭhā* may give rise to its own results as well as to the results of the adoption of the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā*. Accordingly, he, who adopts either of these well, obtains the fruit of both of them. How then can any truly knowing and reasonable person say that they are really different and distinct, that they are unrelated to and incompatible with each other? Only ignorant children may say so.

यत्सांख्यैः प्राप्यते स्थानं तद्योगैरपि गम्यते ।
एकं सांख्यं च योगं च यः पश्यति स पश्यति ॥ ५ ॥

5. That position, which is attained by those who adopt the *sāṅkhya* (stand-point), is also attained by those who adopt the *yōga* (stand-point). He, who

sees the *sāṅkhya* and the *yōga* to be one, (he indeed) sees (truly).

This stanza simply gives expression in a somewhat different form of language to the ideas contained in the previous stanza. We have already learnt that both the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā* and the *yōga-nishṭhā* lead to the same goal, and that each of them is equally well calculated to make the suitable aspirant win the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. And we have been further told that he, who lives well according to either of these standpoints in the philosophy of conduct, obtains the fruit of both of them. The fruit of acting in life according to the speculative philosophical standpoint consists in acquiring certain spiritual and divine realisations. These realisations are therefore within the reach of even such persons as act according to the practical standpoint of unselfish duty duly done. And the fruit of acting in life according to the ordinary, normal, practical stand-point is the unselfish acquisition of worthy power and also the unattached accomplishment of real good for the welfare of society and the advancement of civilisation. This fruit of the *yōga-nishṭhā* may also be seen to be well within the reach of the philosophical seer of steady wisdom. The goal to which the path according to the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā* leads is also the goal to which the path according to the *yōga-nishṭhā* leads: and the path by which the philosophical seer of steady wisdom goes to the goal is as available to the unselfish and unattached practical worker, as the path by which such a worker goes to the same goal is available to the philosophical aspirant after the attainment of soul-salvation. Thus it is doubly true that the position, which is attained by those who adopt the *sāṅkhya* stand-point in the philosophy of conduct, is also attained by those, who adopt the *yōga* stand-point. Consequently, in the philosophy of conduct, the speculative *sāṅkhya* and the practical *yōga* are not so different as to be incompatible with each other. The two disciplines have indeed to be looked upon as one, in as much as their material, moral and spiritual results are seen to be capable of being the same in all respects. Thus he, who sees both these disciplines to be one,—he alone understands their true nature.

संन्यासस्तु महाबाहो दुःखमाप्तुमयोगतः ।
योगयुक्तो मुनिर्ब्रह्म न चिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥ ६ ॥

योगयुक्तो विशुद्धात्मा विजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ७ ॥

6. Renunciation is hard to attain, O Arjuna, without the adoption of the practical life of work. The thoughtful sage, who has adopted the life of work, attains the *Brahman* soon.

7. He, who has adopted the life of work, who is pure in nature, has complete self-control and has overcome the power of the senses, (he) whose self has become the self of all beings,—(he) does not become smeared (with the stain of *karma*), even though he happens to be doing work.

In these two stanzas and a few following ones we are given in brief outline an evaluation as well as a description of the life according to the standpoint of *yōga-nishṭhā*. The very first thing we are told here is that it is not easy to succeed in the practice of renunciation without the full aid of the actual life of steady work. This may mean that true renunciation cannot be attained merely by living the passive life of inaction. We have seen how, when the body is entirely passive and doing no work at all, it is possible for the mind to be actively engaged in forging the fetters of *karma* for the unoffending soul. The life of absolute inaction being impossible, a man may make himself as inactive as possible. But this cannot guarantee that he will not in the end turn out to be a *mithyāchāra*, or a false person of insincere conduct. Therefore, it is not at all safe to maintain that a minimum of activity in life necessarily implies a maximum of true renunciation. It is indeed possible for the case to be quite otherwise also. In fact a maximum of activity may well be associated with a maximum of true renunciation, even as a minimum of activity may be associated with a bare minimum of renunciation. True renunciation can be achieved by all earnest aspirants only by means of the practice of self-sacrifice. Since the inactive man is apt to achieve nothing, his self-sacrifice can

at its best be a mere virtue of necessity: he can only sacrifice what he has not achieved and won, that is, what has never appeared to him to be in any sense his own. Surely *vairāgya* or dispassionate disinterestedness cannot be attained through such a process. Most ordinary people like us can obtain freedom from selfish attachments only by means of a slow and steady struggle. Unless we try to live our common human life in society with all its numerous temptations to induce selfishness and sinfulness in us, and manage at the same time to overcome slowly and little by little those very temptations, so as to achieve at last the pure and sinless condition of unselfishness in relation to ourselves, we surely cannot acquire *vairāgya*. If we live our lives from day to day, performing actively and efficiently all our duties therein without the least attachment to the results of our works, we are in time enabled to acquire the needed *vairāgya* and thereby become truly unselfish workers. Let us earnestly try to-day to sacrifice just a little of what we selfishly consider to be our own; let us do the same thing to-morrow also, and again do likewise the day after as well. The result is that, if we really go on consciously practising self-sacrifice steadily in this manner, we learn in due time that we have as a matter of fact acquired the power of sacrificing more and more of what is ordinarily understood to be our own. This is the only way in which the power of true renunciation will come to us; and that is exactly the reason why we are told here that the power of renunciation is hard to acquire without the adoption of the life of work. From this, we should not, however. commit the mistake of supposing that all those who freely adopt the life of work are certain to become blessed with the power of true renunciation in the end. Such a thing like this is really impossible, because all those, who are subject to temptations in their lives, do not earnestly endeavour to overcome them, and also because even among those, who earnestly and honestly endeavour to overcome temptations, all those that strive do not achieve real success. Consequently, it is the thoughtful sage alone, who, by adopting the life of active work, attains the *Brahman* soon. In his case the experiences of the active life of work are not apt to be disregarded and thrown away uselessly. His sane thoughtfulness will induce him to learn wisdom from those experiences unfailingly. To him even temptations prove to be a source of strength, inasmuch as he is always bent upon overcoming them and at last overcomes them with

noteworthy success. This 'at last' need not imply any very unduly prolonged period of trial. On the other hand, the thoughtful sage may learn wisdom quite quickly; and his deliverance from the bondage of *karma* is certain to take place as soon as he obtains the needed wisdom and puts it effectively into practice. With the deliverance from the bondage of *karma* comes *mōksha*, which, as you all know, is the same thing as the attainment of the *Brahman*. Indeed, such a thoughtful sage, even while he is devoted to the active performance of all his duties in life, cannot but be pure in heart: his power of self-control and sense-conquest becomes drilled and disciplined into great effectiveness day by day, and the wisdom of his accomplished unselfishness is sure to make him feel fully convinced at heart that there can be no real or lasting difference between himself and all the other beings in the universe. When, in this manner, his self becomes the self of all beings, how can it at all be possible for him to be in any way selfish, or how can the sinful stain of *karma* have the power to pollute his pure soul? It is in this manner abundantly demonstrable that the adoption of the life of work is after all the safest means for the attainment of *mōksha;* and it may therefore be adopted by all with great advantage to themselves and beneficent helpfulness to others.

नैव किञ्चित्करोमीति युक्तो मन्येत तत्त्ववित् ।
पश्यन्शृण्वन्स्पृशञ्जिघ्रन्नश्नन्गच्छन्स्वपञ्श्वसन् ॥ ८ ॥
प्रलपन्विसृजन्गृह्णन्नुन्मिषन्निमिषन्नपि ।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेषु वर्तन्त इति धारयन् ॥ ९ ॥

8—9. Even though (engaged in) seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, talking, discharging, receiving, opening out the eyes and closing the eyes, the truth-knowing person, devoted to the performance of duty, should think—'I do nothing at all',—bearing in mind that the organs of sense (as well as of action) operate (of themselves) in relation to the objects of (those) organs.

Here it is clearly evident that the word *indriyāṇi* is used to denote the organs of sense—*jñānendriyāṇi*—as well as the organs of

action—*karmēndriyāṇi.* It may also be noted further that the word *yukta*, found in the first of these two stanzas, means such a person as has adopted the rule of life known by the name of *karma-yōga*, or often merely by the briefer and simpler name of *yōga*, which, as you know, has been explained to mean firstly unselfish equanimity and secondly cleverness in the devoted performance of one's own work in life. In this way *yukta* may very well denote the person who is duly devoted to the performance of duty. The expression *yōga-yukta* is also often used in this sense, as you may easily remember. In these two stanzas, we are taught one of the ways, in which the free adoption of the life of active work may well be made to be helpful to the attainment of God and soul-salvation; and that way is in fact none other than what has been already pointed out to us in the third chapter of the *Gītā* (III. 29.) in the statement गुणा गुणेषु वर्तन्त इति मत्वा न सज्जते. You know that, in this statement, we are in fact given the well-known *sāṅkhya* position, that 'qualities' operate ever in relation to 'qualities' in respect of the performance of all work by all beings in the universe, and that hence the true agent of work in the world is always *prakṛiti* but never the *purusha*. When a person, who has succeeded well in discriminating between the functions of *prakṛiti* and those of the *purusha*, that is, between the working of nature and that of the soul, sees any visible object, for instance, his truly philosophic conviction is certain to lead him to say—" It is obviously the eyes that see; I do not see; my soul is certainly not the seeing agent here". Indeed in relation to the natural work of every one of his organs of sense as well as of action, he is bound to feel that he is not the worker, and that his soul can be in no way the responsible agent of the work done by the organ. I am sure you can all easily see how this amounts to the same thing as coming to know that 'qualities' always operate in relation to 'qualities'. If, in this manner, the idea of a man's agentship, in relation to the work that he does, is understood to be distinctly unfounded, there can then be no justification at all for his allowing himself to be actuated by the unethical feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*. And with the disappearance of these undesirable bondage-compelling feelings, the much needed enfranchising feeling of dispassionate disinterestedness in relation to the skilful and effective discharge of duty

comes in naturally and becomes securely well established in the heart. In other words, *vairāgya* happens to assert itself well and spontaneously in the mind of all such persons as have their feelings of *ahaṅkāra* and *mama-kāra* killed completely. Whoever manages to live by really breathing the serene and unpolluted air of ample *vairāgya*, he surely cannot become subject to the bondage of *karma*, howsoever active and energetically acquisitive his actual life of work may prove to be.

Can we really convince ourselves that, in connection with all the various kinds of work that men and women generally do in life, the final truth is that only 'qualities' ever operate in relation to 'qualities', and that in consequence the organs of sense as well as the organs of action always operate of themselves in relation to their respective objects? It is, as you may know, a very common feature of our experience that, in regard to certain particular kinds of work in our lives, all of us ordinarily consider that we are ourselves truly their actual agents, while, in regard to certain other kinds of work, we do not at all feel in that manner that we are the agents. When for instance, we see a strikingly beautiful picture before us and realise its artistic excellence, do we not then feel positively that we are the agents of the action of seeing? But let us take into consideration the arduous and incessant work, which the heart within us is doing in causing the circulation of our blood. Do we feel here in this case also that we are ourselves the agents of the heart's action? Many of us may not even know that the heart is really doing such work. And how can we, in the circumstance, feel at all that we are the agents of its work? There is thus, in so far as our idea of agentship is concerned, a difference between the work of seeing done by the eye and the work of pumping out the blood done by the heart. Of the former work, we are generally conscious: but of the latter work, we are unconscious altogether. It cannot be argued from this that of the conscious work here we are ourselves bound to be agents, while of the unconscious work we need not be agents at all. The mere association of our consciousness with the natural action of an organ of ours cannot surely entitle us to trace the work of that organ to the soul as its source. The conscious action of seeing with the eye is as much physical and

physiological as the work of the heart, of which we are unconscious. Therefore in neither case is the soul the agent of the work: it is as ittle responsible for the eye seeing its objects as for the heart pumping out the blood for free circulation in the body. It is in this way quite possible to realise that, in relation to every kind of work that a man may be engaged in doing, his soul need not at all be the agent of the work. Our physical and physiological activities can in no way be said to be spiritual in their origin: they belong entirely to the material nature of the composition and constitution of our bodies. If I am I, because of the enduring reality of my soul, and if all my activities in the embodied condition are due to the material nature of my body, it is evident that I cannot be the agent of any work which my body does. Since, in this way, I am never the real worker, I can never rightly feel that I have any title to the fruits of any work. The contemplation of such a philosophical detachment of the soul from the work of the body and all its fruits is therefore certain to be highly helpful to all earnest aspirants in enabling them to live the life of vigorous work, and be at the same time entirely free from the proneness to become subject thereby to the bondage of *karma*.

ब्रह्मण्याधाय कर्माणि सङ्गं त्यक्त्वा करोति यः ।
लिप्यते न स पापेन पद्मपत्रमिवाम्भसा ॥ १० ॥

10. Whoever, having made over (all) works unto the *Brahman* and having given up (all) attachment, performs work, he is not stained by sin, (even) as the lotus leaf is not (wetted) by water.

In this stanza the word *Brahman* has been interpreted by some to mean the same thing as *prakṛiti* or material nature, on the ground that the visible universe also is an infinitely big thing. If *Brahman* has to be understood as *prakṛiti* here, the true import of this stanza cannot be made out to be in any way different from that of the previous stanza. To make over all work to the *Brahman* turns out thus to be really nothing other than making it over to *prakṛiti*; that is, it comes to the same thing as believing that 'qualities' operate in relation to 'qualities', or that the various organs of the body operate naturally of themselves in relation to their respective objects and functions. But *Brahman* here may also be interpreted to mean that

other infinitely big Being, who happens to be the true foundation and support of the universe and of all the numerous beings that live and move therein. If we interpret *Brahman* in this stanza to mean thus the one only God of the *Vēdānta*, it may be seen that there is very great appropriateness in making over all works to Him : indeed they really can belong to none other. You know how the *Vēdāntic* conception of God makes Him the final source of all life and power in the universe, inasmuch as we are taught in clear and unmistakable language in the *Vēdānta* that, without Him, even the end of a blade of grass does not move. If all the power for doing work comes ultimately from Him, then He has to be the agent of all work done by all beings in the universe, and to Him alone can belong the title to enjoy the fruits of work. To know that God is the one Agent in the universe is also to know that therein He is the one only Enjoyer. Therefore, the making over of all works to God, who is the *Brahman*, is also well calculated to produce in those, who do so, freedom from all kinds of selfish attachment to the fruits of work. In fact both these methods of doing work and living the life of active duty, so as to be at the same time fully free from the bondage of *karma*, have been, as many of you know, pointed out to us already. We saw in the course of our study of the third chapter that, after Arjuna was taught how the knowledge and the belief that 'qualities' operate in relation to 'qualities' can keep an active man of work free from the bondage of *karma*, Śrī-Kṛishṇa, wishing to mention to him another suitable creed of true wisdom to follow, declared (III. 30.)—"With a mind fixed on accomplishing the good of the soul, make over all works unto Me, and become free from desire and from the selfish idea of ownership; and then fight without the fever of doubt and anxiety". This process of freely making over all works to Śrī-Kṛishṇa appears to me to be in all respects exactly the same as making them over to the *Brahman*, understood rightly as the One Great Divine Being constituting the life and foundation of the universe, in as much as Śri-Kṛishṇa, being an incarnation of God, may well be identified with that *Brahman*. In whatever way we interpret this stanza, there can be no doubt that it tells us how men may make it possible to live in the world and yet be not of the world. I am sure many of you have seen how the velvety surface of the lotus leaf is not wetted with water, although the lotus plant itself grows

in water. We may pour water freely on that surface of the leaf ; and what happens is that the water becomes broken into a number of small round drops which do not at all adhere to the leaf. When these drops are cleared out, they leave no trace of water behind them, the non-attachment between the water and the velvety surface of the lotus leaf being indeed so complete. The relation of the soul of man to the life of work that he lives has to be of such a character in its ideal condition. The soul has to be brought, as it were, into constant contact with *karma* ; and even as the water drops on the lotus leaf do not at all cling to the leaf, even so this *karma* should not cling to the soul with which it is closely brought into contact. Such a non-adherence of *karma* to the soul of the man of work is perfectly possible, as long as he does his duties well in life without any selfish attachment to the fruits of his work. It is found, in the case of a man of that kind, that his life of strenuous and unceasing work can give rise to no taint of sin in relation to his soul : that is, no work can create in him any latent tendency calculated to compel his soul to undergo again the material imprisonment implied in the process of re-incarnation.

कायेन मनसा बुद्धया केवलैरिन्द्रियैरपि ।
योगिनः कर्म कुर्वन्ति सङ्गं त्यक्त्वात्मशुद्धये ॥ ११ ॥

11. With a view to attain self-purification, the *yōgins* give up all selfish attachment, and perform work by means of the body, the mind and the intellect, as also by means of the senses merely.

The first point, to which I wish to draw your attention in this stanza, is that the word *yōginaḥ* is therein used to denote those, who have adopted in life the *yōga-nishṭhā* in preference to the *sāṅkhya-nishṭhā*. Hence this word must have the same meaning as *karma-yōginaḥ*, and should denote those persons who are devoted to the performance of duties and live an active and unselfish life of work in society, as distinguished from those other persons who live the ascetic life of extreme unworldliness and full philosophic renunciation and meditation. Another point worthy of note here is the widely comprehensive sense in which work is understood. It is evidently implied in this stanza that the body in itself may perform work, that

the faculties of attention and intellection may also perform work, and that again the senses also in themselves may very well do their work. Accordingly, our bodily activity may or may not be in association with our mental activity; and similarly our mental activity may or may not be in association with our bodily activity. Moreover, this stanza evidenly makes it necessary for us to see distinctly that what really deserves to be called absolute worklessness cannot be other than a completely effortless and do-nothing passivity in relation to the body as well as the mind. It is well known that, as long as human nature continues to be human nature, such a thing as absolute inaction is incapable of being practised by man. But why should men for this reason become *karma-yōgins* and adopt the *yōga-nishṭhā* in their lives? The answer to this question may be found in the fact that work done as duty, without attachment to the fruits thereof, possesses the great virtue of producing the self-purification of the unselfish worker. A man's self-purification really consists in his successfully removing from himself all the latent impulses and bondage-compelling tendencies of accumulated *karma*. It may look like a contradiction in terms to declare that every work gives rise to its own *samskāra* or latent impulse and tendency, and that it is nevertheless work alone which can really enable us to free ourselves from the influence of such *samskāras*. If we bring to our mind that the tainting *samaskāra* of work is due not to the work itself, but to the selfish disposition of the mind with which the work is done by the worker, the seeming contradiction in the statement vanishes at once. The adoption of the direct path of the renunciation of works, which we know by the name of *karma-sannyāsa*, is in the case of most of us so hard as to be almost impossible. A hasty and incautious adoption of the path of *karma-sannyāsa*, without our being beforehand in full possession of the pre-requisite *vairāgya*, is certain to make us apt to live such a life as has in it only a hollow insincere show of renunciation. A life, in which one is thus forced to be false to one's self, cannot surely give rise to that self-purification which is conducive to the attainment of the salvation of *mōksha*. On the other hand such a false life is certain to endanger the progress of the soul and to drive the insincere and over-hasty aspirant farther and farther away from the goal of soul-salvation. But the life of *karma-yōga* is never indeed so risky, and can always enable all earnest

aspirants to attain by degrees that self-purification, which, in its fulness, may be seen to be nothing less than complete freedom from the taint of *karma*. The life of *karma-yōga* can very well enable us to acquire step by step the power of making ourselves free from sensuality and selfishness. Both purity and moral strength come to the heart of man only through the struggle to overcome effectively the temptation to be sensual and selfish. He, who runs away from temptations, can never hope to acquire the strength needed to overcome temptations. It is only the struggle against temptations that can endow our will with the power required to withstand them. This of course does not mean, as I have already pointed out to you, that we should needlessly court temptations. If we do so, we are often apt to be led to go beyond our depth and to become hopelessly drowned in an ocean of suffering and sorrow and sin. We have therefore to endeavour to overcome gradually and little by little our innate unspiritual tendencies in favour of selfishness and sensuality. It will not do for us to believe that we are strong enough to be pure and unselfish, when we are not really so strong; it is indeed dangerous to act on that wrong belief and adopt all at once the life of unworldly asceticism and renunciation. In fact it is only by the slow and steady practice of the unselfish life of work that we can assuredly free ourselves from the taint of *karma*. The proper performance of fruit-yielding work, as duty and without attachment to the fruits produced, gives rise gradually to self-purification, even as the performance of work, with attachment to the fruits thereof, gives rise to the impurity of soul-pollution due to the taint of the evil of *karma*. Accordingly, *karma-yōgins* do their duties in life without any attachment to the fruits of their work. In this way alone do they manage successfully to free themselves from the taint of *karma* so as to become fitted for the assured attainment of the soul-salvation of *mōksha*.

XXVI

Last time we took into consideration the answer of Śrī-Kṛishṇa to the question of Arjuna as to whether it is in fact *karma-sannyāsa* or *karma-yōga*, which is decidedly good and worthy to be adopted by all those that are anxious to live their lives aright. You know that, when briefly stated, Śrī-Kṛishṇa's answer to the question is that both are good and worthy—or rather that each is really good in its own

place. If, as I have tried to explain to you once before, both theory and practice have to be so completely consistent with each other as to make them appear to be one in reality, then the adoption of the practical path of *karma-yōga* has to produce the same moral and spiritual results, as the adoption of the less active course of conduct denoted by *karma-sannyāsa* may do. In fact they have both to serve as suitable means for the attainment of soul-salvation through the previous achievement of complete freedom from the bondage of *karma*. When he, who aspires to become a good *karma-yōgin*, succeeds in acquiring such power of self-control and such freedom from selfishness and sensuality, as enable him to do his duties well without attachment to the fruits of work, and feels further in the innermost depth of his own heart that, in relation to every work done by him in his life, he is not the real worker, and that therefore he can lay no claim to any sort of ownership in respect of the fruits growing out of any or all of his deeds in life,—then, he is certain to be unceasingly swayed by the unshakeable conviction that the only thing for which he has any title at all in life is his obligation to do all his duties well and without flaws. When such a conviction holds sway in his heart, he is of course fully prepared to endeavour effectively for the accomplishment of his own freedom from the bondage of *karma*. Accordingly, in addition to its own suitableness to lead one to the goal of soul-salvation, the path of *karma-yōga* may be seen to be fully helpful in guiding aright the faithful God-ward traveller in the preliminary journey needed to lead him safely on to the more direct and also more difficult path of *karma-sannyāsa*. Thus we see that *karma-yōga* is not only an effective means in itself for the attainment of *mōksha*, but also serves as a suitable course of preparation for the adoption of the life of *karma-sannyāsa* by such as have the natural fitness and qualification for it. This is due to the fact that this life of renunciation and unworldliness presupposes perfect purity and strong unselfishness in the heart of him, who is rightly eligible to adopt it, and that such purity and unselfishness can be only gradually gained with the aid of the completely disinterested life of duty honestly and earnestly lived and ever held in view as the ideal life. We may take it to be Śrī-Kṛishṇa's opinion that, the greater the ease and naturalness, with which ordinary aspirants adopt any path of self-realisation and God-realisation, the higher must be the excellence and superiority of that path. Viewed in this light, the path of *karmayōga*

is decidedly superior to the path of *karma-sannyāsa*. And in the last *ślōka* we did on the last occasion, we were told, as you may remember, that the life of *karma-yōga* has the power of giving rise to what has been called *ātma-śuddhi* therein, which, you know, is indeed the same thing as self-purification. It is for the attainment of this self-purification that all active *yōgins* undertake to live the life of work and self-denial. Indeed, without the due practice of work, there can be no scope at all for self-denial, as many of us know so well. He, who has nothing to sacrifice, can never learn the supremely moral art of self-abnegation. Surely we have all to work and to labour before we can hope to reap; and what we have not reaped, it is impossible for us to renounce. Without sacrificing what one is ordinarily apt to look upon as one's own, there can be no practice of self-denial; and without the incessant practice of self-denial, there can be no self-purification. Here we have the key which unlocks to us the secret of the obligatoriness of our doing what it is naturally fit for us to do as duty; and we thereby see why it is that in the case of the vast majority of men the adoption of the active path of *karma-yōga* is more conducive to their good than the adoption of the other path of *karma-sannyāsa*. In the stanza with which we begin our work today, the ultimate result of the life of *karma-yōga*, duly lived, is quite distinctly stated first; and this result is then contrasted with the result of the life which is not characterised in any manner whatsoever by a truly disinterested devotion to duty. The stanza runs thus—

युक्तः कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम् ।
अयुक्तः कामकारेण फले सक्तो निबध्यते ॥ १२ ॥

12. Whoever is (disinterestedly) devoted to duty, (he) gives up the fruits of work and (then) attains everlasting peace: (but) he, who is not (so) devoted to duty, becomes attached to the fruits (of work) owing to (his) being impelled by (wishful) desire, and is (thereby) subjected to bondage.

Here in this stanza the *karma-yōgin*, who has adopted the path of duty and self-denial in life, is evidently understood to be a *yukta*. Whoever has adopted *yōga* is a *yukta*; and where *yōga* means

disinterested devotion to duty, the *yukta* very naturally happens to be the person who is disinterestedly devoted to duty. But who is the *a-yukta*? It may be said that whoever is not a *yukta* is of course an *a-yukta*. This we all know well enough. But what we have to make sure of now is, whether this word *a-yukta* indicates a person, who, instead of following the active path of *karma-yōga*, has adopted the passive path of *karma-sannyāsa*, or whether it indicates a person, who, while living the life of work, does not at all look upon it as a continuous course of disinterested devotion to duty, but is led away by the desire to seek objects of enjoyment and to become attached to them in selfishness. Careful thought inclines me to hold that the *a-yukta* referred to in this stanza cannot be the person, who has chosen *karma-sannyāsa* as the means for the attainment of *mōksha*. If, as we have been told, both *karma-yōga* and *karma-sannyāsa* are equally efficient as worthy means for the attainment of *mōksha*, it follows as a matter of course that he, who adopts the life of *karma-sannyāsa* duly, becomes thereby fitted for *mōksha* and for the attainment of everlasting peace. But the *a-yukta* here is declared to become subject to the bondage of *karma*, which means that he is by his life disqualified for the attainment of *mōksha*. Evidently the word *a-yukta* here denotes the interested worker, whose work is impelled by desire, and who is himself attached in consequence to the fruits of work. Therefore the distinction, which is drawn here, is that, which may be made out to exist between the interested selfish worker and the truly disinterested doer of duty as duty in life. Accordingly, it is clearly not the distinction between the person, who has appropriately adopted the life of *karma-yōga*, and the person who has, without such appropriateness, adopted the life of *karma-sannyāsa*. We have to see that this stanza is the last one dealing with *karma-yōga* in this chapter; and all the remaining stanzas herein deal with *karma-sannyāsa*. It is also good to note that we are told, in the very last stanza of the chapter, that even he, who adopts the life of unworldliness and renunciation, is enabled to attain supreme spiritual peace. The everlasting peace which comes to him, who gives up the fruits of work and is disinterestedly devoted to duty, cannot be different from the peace which comes to him, who adopts the life of unworldliness and renunciation. The peace which comes to both is obviously the same peace which passeth all understanding; and each of them therefore gets the same reward

for living his own appropriate life in the appropriate way. Let it be observed that the goal of attainment happens thus to be the same in both of these cases. This must prove to us conclusively that, as we have been told, the path of work and the path of wisdom are in fact one and the same, that to follow either of those paths well leads truly to the attainment of the fruit of both of them, and that in consequence only ignorant and foolish people maintain that the path of work is in reality different from the path of wisdom. The life which rightly follows the path of worthy wisdom is, as you must all be aware, the life of *jñāna-yōga ;* and this life is very much the same as the life of *karma-sannyāsa* rightly understood. With the next stanza we have to begin the exposition of the life of *karma-sannyāsa.*

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन् न कारयन् ॥ १३ ॥

13. Inside the city of nine gateways, there abides happily the soul possessed of self-mastery, having, by means of the mind, renounced all works, and neither doing (anything) at all nor causing (anything) to be done.

What has been translated here as 'soul' is the Sanskrit word *dēhin ;* and you are well aware that it literally means the possessor or the owner of the body. From the fact that this name *dēhin* is given to the soul, we are naturally led to draw the inference that the body is, as it were, the instrument of the soul, whereby the soul may either find its freedom or go on forging its own fetters for ever. शरीरमाद्यं खलु धर्मसाधनम्—is, as you may know, a very common Sanskrit adage, and it means that the body is in fact the very first instrument for the accomplishment of duty. Since the accomplishment of duty in the true spirit of the *karma-yōgin* is calculated to make one attain the salvation of soul-emancipation, there can be no difficulty in making out how the body has to perform on our behalf the functions of a very necessary and very useful instrument in enabling us to realise the final freedom of the soul. Moreover, the use of the word *dēhin* here to represent the soul suggests to us clearly what we have to understand by the 'city of nine gateways'. The most common name by which

the soul is denoted in the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy is *purusha;* and the word *purusha* is often derivatively interpreted to mean a being who has lain down to sleep inside a city. The city thought of here is the body, which happens to be the soul's abode. It is therefore quite clear that the city of nine gateways mentioned in this *ślōka* must mean the body looked upon as the abode of the soul. The nine gateways of this city are none other than the nine markedly observable openings to be found in association with the human body. Please note that we are told here that, in order to be able to abide happily in this city of nine gateways, the soul has to be in full possession of the quality of self-mastery. That is, it has to be a *vaśin*, as we say in Sanskrit. The enfranchised soul, when in the enjoyment of its natural heritage of inborn light and unlimited freedom, must obviously be of its own nature in full possession of the power of self-mastery. But the case is different in relation to the embodied soul. Since, in the case of all souls, embodiment is in fact equivalent to imprisonment in matter, it cannot at all be easy for any embodied soul to command well the precious power of self-mastery. However, there seems to be no doubt whatever that it can be sometimes commanded even by an embodied soul. It should be distinctly understood that, in the case of the embodied soul, the acquisition of self-mastery becomes possible only with the full aid and complete co-operation of the mind. The man, who is truly a *vaśin*, must necessarily have himself entirely under his own control: his will-power must be strong, and the strength of his soul must be decidedly great. Such a man cannot be tempted to turn away from the correct path of duty and righteousness by any kind of allurement. As against the strong and determined power of his unshaking will, all temptations are certain to prove weak and futile. The idea is that such a man may very well succeed in making his soul, even when it happens to be embodied, conform to its original condition of blissful freedom,—the condition which it had before it became imprisoned in a material embodiment. It is a well established conclusion of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy that the soul, in its own natural, unpolluted and unembodied condition of happy freedom and illumination, neither does work nor causes any work to be done. The most essential thing in that life of wisdom, which is fully in keeping with the requirements of the *jñāna-mārga*, consists in working out this possible conformity into an actual reality. What

we have here is not a reasonably easy and ordinarily workable adjustment of practice to theory,—as it happens to be the case in living the life of *karma-yōga*, but a forceful transformation of the theory itself into actual practice. This of course cannot be achieved quite absolutely without any reservation, for the reason that practical conditions are invariably so very different from purely theoretical considerations. Theory generally views the soul as untouched by all its limitations, and also as unembodied and free and full of innate bliss and illumination. But practice is bound to take note of the embodied soul as it is,—that is, with all its superposed limitations and imperfections. It is quite true that the unembodied soul neither does work nor causes any work to be done; but it is utterly impossible for the embodied soul to be in that manner absolutely unconcerned with work. We have been emphatically told already that no embodied being of any kind can continue to live without work even for a moment, and that all embodied beings are inevitably compelled to do work by the very 'qualities' of the *prakṛiti* making up their embodiments. Consequently, even that fortunate person who is a true *vaśin* and whose soul is therefore in full possession of the mighty power of self-mastery, cannot literally give up work altogether. On the other hand, all such persons may renounce all work only mentally, that is, by means of their minds. This means that, even while they are doing all such work as happen to be naturally inevitable, they can manage to feel convinced that their soul is not the worker, and that the work done by them has really been done by their embodiment under the impulse of its own physical and physiological tendencies. The strength of this conviction is dependent upon the clearness of their intellect, upon the vividness of their imagination, and upon the unyielding power of their will. Hence they cannot renounce work except with the aid of the mind: and when the mind is really helpful, they may well feel that the soul, though embodied, is quite as absolutely unconcerned with work of all sorts as if it were really unembodied. The soul in itself is always unengaged in work: as we say in Sanskrit, it is *nishkriya*, whether it happens to be embodied and bound, or is unembodied and free. Accordingly we are told—

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥ १४ ॥

14. In the case of people, the master (soul) does not give rise to (the idea of) agency; nor (does it give rise) to actions, nor to the attachment to the fruits of actions. But (only) nature operates.

In this stanza we have the word *prabhu* used to denote the soul; and *prabhu* in Sanskrit generally means 'master' or 'lord'. I have therefore translated it here as the 'master soul'. How the soul is master may be well enough made out from its common designation as *dēhin*, that is, as the owner of the body. It must be evident from this point of view that, as between the soul and the body, the owner soul is indeed the master and the owned body the servant. This does not and of course cannot mean that, in the case of every embodied being, we always observe the body playing the part of the servant in relation to the soul. On the other hand, we may very easily point to many instances wherein life is so badly lived as to compel us to come to the conclusion that, in so far as those unhappy instances at any rate are concerned, the master soul is really subordinated to the servant body. Nevertheless, careful and comprehensive observation and thought are certain to enable us to see that such instances only illustrate an abnormal condition, and that intrinsically and in the normal state the body is created to be the servant of the soul. Who indeed does not know among us that, in the usual struggle between the spirit and the flesh, which is always going on in every one of us, the spirit is certainly intended to be, and can also well manage to be, the master of the situation? In spite of this fact, are we not aware of saddening moments in our own lives, when we feel that the spirit is really too weak and the flesh too strong? This sort of predominance in relation to the tendencies of the flesh in our lives on occasions cannot logically give rise to the conclusion that the spirit is in itself and of its own normal nature designed to be always weaker than the flesh. Therefore there assuredly ought to be no difficulty whatever in understanding how, as between the body and the soul, the soul is indeed the master, and how all the activities of the body are so planned and ordered as to aim at and subserve the final liberation of the soul from its imprisonment in matter. Another thing, which we may even more easily understand, is that all the activities of the

body are ultimately physical in their character, and can perfectly scientifically be accounted for in accordance with the laws of matter and of energy. Early in the course of these lectures, I remember having drawn your attention to the fact that the physicist's analysis of the universe gives rise to the ultimate principles of matter, energy, space and time, while the psychologist's analysis thereof gives rise, in addition to these principles as belonging to the objective world, to the principle of consciousness as a thing constituting the substance and root-reality of the life of the subjective world. This principle of consciousness is, as we have already learnt, in intimate association with the matter constituting the external world, but is nevertheless essentially different from it. There have been certain attempts made by certain philosophers to see if matter and mind, as they generally understand them in English, can be identified, either by making the mind to be a product of matter or by making matter to be a product of the mind. But it may be said without any unfairness to any one of such thinkers that these attempts have not really succeeded, and that the essential distinction between matter and mind remains altogether unaffected even yet. Therefore, we may safely maintain that, although the body is invariably seen to be the instrument of the mind, the activities of the body are all physical and chemical, and hence belong only to matter but not to the principle of consciousness. It is indeed this idea, which is given expression to in this stanza. It is a fundamental idea belonging to the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy, and is consequently an ancient acquisition in the history of higher Hindu thought. The essential distinctness of consciousness from matter, in spite of their intimate and widely prevalent association, makes it incumbent upon us not to attribute directly the activities of the material embodiment to the soul itself. In fact it is impossible for us to conceive how any of the activities of the body may be directly attributed to or derived from the soul. The soul cannot therefore be the agent of the activities of the body: in other words, the soul of itself cannot, in relation to embodied beings, give rise to the idea of agency, because it cannot give rise to their actions. Since, in this manner, the responsibility for the activities of embodied beings and for the idea of their agency in respect of those activities does not belong to the soul, it cannot be held to be answerable for the attachment which such beings feel for the fruits of their action so as to

claim them all to be their own. Work, its agency, and the attachment to its fruits—all these belong to *prakṛiti*, to material nature. So, in producing these things, only nature operates.

नादत्ते कस्यचित् पापं न चैव सुकृतं विभुः ।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तवः ॥ १५ ॥

15. The master (soul) does not accept any one's *pāpa*, nor even (does it accept any one's) *puṇya*. Knowledge is covered over with ignorance; (and) thereby (all) born beings become deluded.

The word which has been translated as 'master soul' here is *vibhu*, but not *prabhu* as found in the previous stanza. In Sanskrit philosophic language the word *vibhu* generally has a peculiar technical significance. It means generally 'all-pervading', as opposed to *aṇu*, which means atomic in the sense of being 'spacially limited'. God, for instance, is recognised to be *vibhu* in almost all schools of Hindu philosophy, while the individual soul is considered by some schools to be *vibhu* and by other schools to be *aṇu*. The pantheistic monism of Śaṅkarāchārya, which identifies the individual soul with the *Brahman*, who is held to be the Supreme Soul and the Only Reality in the universe, looks upon both God and soul as being omnipresent and all-pervading, that is, as *vibhu*. But Rāmānujāchārya's qualified monism holds God to be *vibhu*, and the individual soul to be *aṇu*. From this you may gather what the technical philosophic sense of the word *vibhu* is. But it is not in this technical sense that the word is used in this stanza. It is used here so as to be synonymous with *prabhu*; and this usage is common enough in non-technical literary Sanskrit. You cannot fail to see that the context offers a very strong justification for adopting this latter interpretation of the word *vibhu* here. Another point to which I desire to draw your attention is that I have left the word *pāpa* untranslated, and have translated the word *sukṛita* as *puṇya*. The reason for this is that the words *pāpa* and *puṇya* are so very familiar to so many of us, and also that it is far from easy to find exact equivalents for them in English. You know that these words denote what we have become accustomed to speak of as the internal imprint of work—the imprint which

is responsible for all the inborn tendencies and potentialities which living beings exhibit. The word *puṇya* represents the imprint left by good and worthy deeds done in life; and it is sometimes translated by the English word 'merit'. The word *pāpa*, on the other hand, represents the imprint left by bad and unworthy deeds, and is in this sense translated by the English word 'demerit'. As you are aware, *pāpa* is also translatable as 'sin'. It must be evident to you that these words, as used in this stanza, are intended to denote the bondage-compelling taint of *karma*. And it is well to remember that *puṇya* is as much calculated to give rise to the bondage of *karma* as *pāpa* is.

And now the question is whether these bondage-producing effects of work—in the form of *puṇya* as well as of *pāpa*—appertain to the soul or to the body. If really the soul were the responsible agent in relation to the activities that embodied beings go through in life, if the soul were, in other words, the source of all their action in living beings, it would of course be responsible for the clinging attachment which almost all such beings feel for the fruits of work. Please remember again that work in itself is incapable of giving rise to the bondage of *karma*, and that it is therefore the clinging attachment to the fruits of work which stands in the way of the liberation of the soul. We have been told in the previous stanza that the soul is not responsible for any such clinging attachment to the fruits of work. This implies that the soul itself is not in any way answerable for the production of either *puṇya* or *pāpa* in the case of any embodied being. The statement here—that the master soul does not accept either any one's *pāpa* or any one's *puṇya*—gives expression to this very idea. It must be clear to you that, as long as the soul is not responsible for work, it can lay no claim for the fruits of work: and when it has no title for the fruits of work, it cannot be held to be responsible for any one's clinging attachment to the fruits of work. Thus the soul in itself is ever free from all the tainting effects of work—from *puṇya* as well as from *pāpa*. Still the *saṁskāra* or the internal imprint of work in the form of *puṇya* and *pāpa* is understood to cause the soul to become subject to re-incarnation. How this takes place is a very different question, from whether it is the body or the soul, which is responsible for the production as well as the retention of that *saṁskāra*, which compels the soul to undergo re-incarnation. In the way

in which a free man, when put into gaol for some adequate reason becomes naturally subject to all the current prison rules and regulations, even so the free soul, when confined in material embodiments, becomes equally subject to the restricting influences and limitations appertaining to the prison-house of matter. It is thus that knowledge comes to be covered over with ignorance. The soul is held to be *chinmaya* and *svayam-prakāśa* in Hindu philosophy, which means that it is essentially of the nature of consciousness and is self-luminous. Evidently the idea conveyed by this is that the soul knows itself and also makes other things known. Thus its essential characteristic is knowledge, so much so indeed that it may itself be well spoken of as the principle of knowledge. Hindu philosophy, it has to be said, considers *prakṛiti* to be *jaḍa*, that is, it holds material nature to be devoid of the power of knowing, which belongs only to consciousness. Matter or external nature can become the object of knowledge, but knowing forms no part of its function. If thus the soul may be appropriately conceived as 'knowledge', its vestment of matter may equally appropriately be conceived as 'ignorance'. Accordingly, the reason, why all born beings are deluded into believing that the soul is responsible for the activities of the body and all their effects, is that 'knowledge' is covered over with 'ignorance'. In other words, this false belief is due to the fact that in all embodied beings the soul happens to be in very intimate association with matter, and that this association has placed limitations upon the luminosity of the soul and thus made it to become subject to delusion and ignorance.

ज्ञानेन तु तदज्ञानं येषां नाशितमात्मनाम् ।
तेषामादित्यवज्ज्ञानं प्रकाशयति तत्परम् ॥ १६ ॥

16. But in the case of those, in respect of whose souls, this ignorance has been destroyed by wisdom,—(in their case) wisdom, like the sun, illuminates (all) that to which it relates.

The supreme object of the wisdom here referred to is to know that the soul is in no way the responsible agent in relation to the activities of embodied beings, and that it is not therefore answerable for the attachment which such beings feel in relation to the fruits of work. Most of us do not ordinarily understand this, as it is so hard

for us to distinguish between the body and the soul. We are all prone to be swayed by the feelings of *i ness* and *mine-ness ;* and we do not see that for the production of these selfish feelings our souls are not responsible. Our incapacity in relation to this matter is due to the knowledge of the truth regarding it being shrouded in ignorance, to our mistaking what happen to be the promptings and the tendencies of the body as the natural results of conscious and voluntary impulses proceeding from the soul itself. Let us imagine a truly wise philosopher, who has, in his own case, actually succeeded in realising that the body is different from the soul, and that the selfish feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* are due to unwholesome influences proceeding entirely from the body. If his realisation is at all as actual and lively as it ought to be, will he any longer allow himself to be swayed by the old delusion of selfishness, or will he speak of himself as before in the same old language of ignorance ? It cannot but be evident to you that such a thing is in his case utterly impossible. In the manner in which ignorance shrouds and covers up wisdom, in that same manner wisdom exposes as well as destroys ignorance. In any case the knowledge of truth, as it is, is naturally bound to destroy the wrong apprehension of truth, otherwise than as it is. Hence, the real possibility of the full destruction of ignorance by wisdom, it is altogether impossible to question. Accordingly, the power of wisdom to disclose the truth of things is undoubtedly unquestionable. The wisdom, which effectively discriminates the soul from the body, cannot fail to discriminate the tendencies of the spirit from those of the flesh. The light of wisdom, even more than the light of the sun, dispels darkness and makes reality not only visible but also approachable with informing knowledge and unfailing confidence.

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तन्निष्ठास्तत्परायणाः ।
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्मषाः ॥ १७ ॥

17. Having that in mind, making that their self, abiding in that and holding that as the supreme goal, those, whose impurity has (all) been washed away by wisdom, attain (that state) wherefrom there is no coming back again.

The *tat* which occurs four times in this stanza and has been translated by the English word 'that', denotes the same thing as the *tat* in the *tat-para* in the previous stanza. In other words, the antecedent of the *tat* here in this stanza is nothing other than what happens to be the object of the illuminating wisdom mentioned in the previous stanza. What that illuminating wisdom brings to light is the thing, which, on being well held in mind and closely acted up to, enables one to get rid of all the impurity that is due to ignorance, so as to make the attainment of the final freedom of soul-salvation easy as well as certain thereafter. That is what this stanza evidently says. To understand well what it really is, which the wise man's illuminating wisdom brings to light, we have very naturally to take into consideration what that thing is, which the deluded man's ignorance is declared to hide from his view. We have been just now informed that the ignorance, wherein wisdom becomes enshrouded, prevents us from realising the essential distinctness of the soul from the body, and thereby causes us to become so deluded as to be led to believe that the soul is responsible for all the tendencies and activities of the body. He, who has in himself wisdom enough to discriminate effectively the soul from the body,—he surely cannot make the spirit answerable for all the various promptings and faults of the flesh. Accordingly, what the wise man's illuminating wisdom generally does is, that it enables him to discriminate the soul from the body so well as to make him attain thereby an actual realisation of their essential distinctness and separable responsibility. If the wisdom of thus discriminating the soul from the body is to be put into practice in life, we have first of all to bear steadily in our minds the well-proved distinction between the body and the soul. Our mind, in other words, has to be completely concentrated on the idea of the utter distinctness of the soul from the body. Such a strong concentration of the mind on this idea is certain to make us feel that the very reality of our existence rests upon our apprehension of the essential distinctness of the immortal soul from the mortal body. To those, who are not well convinced of this distinctness in their heart of hearts,—to them it is wholly impossible to become convinced of the enduring reality of their own souls. It may be very probably for this reason that we are called upon, in the practice of the life of *jñāna-yōga*, to strongly concentrate our mind on the essential

distinctness of the soul from the body, so as to make the apprehension of that distinctness become, as it were, our very self. Earnest and continued concentration of the mind on any idea makes that idea an essential part of the mental life of the person who practises such concentration; and he becomes thereby apt to feel that that idea is his very self, so that without it he cannot conceive how he may live at all. It is not enough for the *jñāna-yōgin* merely to feel convinced that the apprehension of the distinctness of the soul from the body forms the very essence of his life: he has further to abide steadily in that idea of distinctness. That is, the concentration of his mind on the essential distinctness of the soul from the body has to be not only intense and earnest, but also unceasing and unchanging: and when, as required, it becomes unceasing and unchanging, he becomes unaware of the fact that this felt distinctness of the soul from the body is an idea entertained by him—an idea which abides in him—but on the contrary begins to feel that he himself abides in it, so that it forms his very support and source of sustentation. When in this manner the sense of the real separateness of the soul from the body becomes such a dominating factor in the life of the *jñāna-yōgin*, is it any wonder that he will then whole-heartedly look upon the actual realisation of that separateness as the very goal of his life, as indeed the highest good of his existence?

Such are the four stages in the mental discipline of *jñāna-yōga*, as adopted by the *Sāṅkhyas*. And the question now is, how this mental discipline is calculated to give rise to the salvation of *mōksha*. 'That state, wherefrom there is no returning again', is, as you must all be well aware, nothing other than this salvation of soul-liberation. You are also aware that all embodied souls are conceived to be, as it were, imprisoned in matter; and this imprisonment naturally subjects such souls to limitations of more than one kind. To make them attain their natural and intrinsic freedom by ending for ever their connection with imprisoning matter is to bestow upon them the salvation of final liberation. As it is well known that what keeps them confined in the prison of matter is *karma*, we can certainly make out that the salvation of soul-liberation may be attained only through the exhaustion of *karma*. In regard to the *jñāna-yōgin*, who has successfully adopted in his life the discipline that has just been

described, we have already been given to understand that therein all his impurities are sure to be washed away by his true wisdom. The impurities here referred to are those which arise out of the tainting tendency of *karma*. But for such tainting impurities, no soul need ever be under any kind of compulsion to be imprisoned in matter. We have therefore to understand that, in the case of the person, who goes through this discipline of *jñāna-yōga* effectively, his realised wisdom is well able to bring about the exhaustion of all his *karma*. The basic principle, on which this wisdom of his is built, is, as you know, the conviction of the essential distinctness of the soul from the body. The natural corollaries that follow from the truth of this basic principle are also, as a matter of logical necessity, included within the scope and compass of this wisdom of the *jñāna-yōgin*. Hence the following conclusions become part of his living faith:—that, as between the body and the soul, the body is the servant and the soul the master; that, nevertheless, owing to their essential distinctness, the soul is not and cannot be responsible for the tendencies and activities of the body; and that attachment to the fruits of work and the consequent feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* are due to the operation of the power and the influence of the body. In consequence, he is impelled to make it certain in his own life that the servant body does not dominate over the master soul, so as to manage to hold it in subjection. And you know that it is generally in the power of the master to see to it, that the servant duly serves the master and works well for the accomplishment of the master's good. To make the master soul see to this in relation to the servant body is in fact the main endeavour in the life of the aspiring *jñāna-yōgin*: and when he succeeds in this endeavour, it becomes utterly impossible for him to be attached to the fruits of work and to be swayed by the feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*. The immediate result of this is that his bondage-compelling *karma* is thereby altogether destroyed. It is thus that his wisdom washes away all his impurities. Please remember here that we have been already told that, in the manner in which a well kindled fire converts all fuel into ashes, even so the fire of wisdom converts all *karma* into ashes. When, through his wisdom, the *jñāna-yōgin* becomes freed from the bondage-compelling influence of *karma*, then his soul becomes fit to acquire and to enjoy the blessing of final freedom: and when this final freedom is won,

then there is no necessity for that soul to become reincarnated, that is, to be again imprisoned in a material embodiment. The attainment of such final freedom—which we call *mōksha*—is in fact the attainment of that state wherefrom there is no returning again.

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥ १८ ॥

18. Wise sages look alike upon the Brāhmaṇa, who is well possessed of learning and humility, upon the cow and the elephant, and also upon the dog and the *chaṇḍāla*.

We may well ask here what the nature of the wisdom possessed by these wise sages is, which enables them to look alike upon all sorts of embodied beings, and to observe in relation to them none of those distinctions, which generally catch the attention of persons, who are in no sense really wise sages. The answer to this query may easily enough be gathered from the definition of a *paṇḍita*, or wise sage, as it is found given in a stanza in the previous chapter (IV. 19.). There, we are told, that he is the true *paṇḍita*, whose activities are not impelled by the selfish promptings of desire, and whose *karma* has been completely consumed in the kindled fire of wisdom. Therefore, the wisdom possessed by those *paṇḍitas*, who command the sense of equality in relation to their true perception of all embodied beings, must be such as is capable of destroying all the promptings of desire within the human heart, and of consuming the *karma* of men and women and all its polluting effects into ashes. You may now see at once that this wisdom is the same as that of the *jñāna-yōgin*, which is built upon the fundamental recognition of the essential distinctness of the soul from the body and upon the natural and necessary corollaries of that well established distinctness. Accordingly, the *paṇḍitas* mentioned here are in fact successful *jñāna-yōgins*. It is worth observing that, among the instances of various embodied beings given in this stanza, we have the cultured Brāhmaṇa of due humility on the one hand, and the outcaste *chaṇḍāla* on the other : and so also we have the sacred cow and the royal elephant on the one hand and the polluting untouchable dog on the other hand. The vision of most

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ordinary persons in the world cannot be generally uncognisant of the distinction which is observed commonly between the Brahmin and the *chaṇḍāla*, or between the cow and the dog, or again between the elephant and the dog. It is, however, different in the case of the vision of the *jñāna-yōgin*. In his case, these distinctions, being dependent upon accidents connected with the material embodiment of beings, are certain not to be taken into serious account at all. He always sees the reality of an embodied being not in the material embodiment but in the indwelling master soul, because it is the soul which owns the body as its working instrument. In the same manner, he further realises from his personal experience that all souls possess, like his own soul, the self-luminosity of consciousness, and that all embodiments are, like his own body, material and non-conscious in their essential character. One embodiment may be different from another in point of its configuration and impressed internal tendencies and potentialities. But no two pure enfranchised souls can really differ from each other in their essential characteristics.

Such is the *Sāṅkhya* view regarding the nature of the soul. Except in regard to the question of the ultimate unity or multiplicity of souls, about which there is difference of opinion among *Vēdāntins* of the different schools, the *Vēdānta* also maintains that, in the state of final freedom, all the liberated individual souls have to be alike in nature as well as in essence. It does not evidently require much thought to make out from this that all souls, as they are in themselves, are absolutely alike. Therefore, from the stand-point of the *jñāna-yōgin's* soul-realization, it is a matter of logical necessity for him, to look alike upon all embodied beings; and the degree of his success in living the life of supreme philosophic wisdom is measured by the degree of the thoroughness of his sense of equality in relation to all embodied beings. I remember having heard once a punctiliously orthodox Brahmin woman, asking a pariah woman, who was passing by, to keep at a distance from her in language which was in no way kindly or conciliatory. On being so spoken to, the pariah woman very naturally became irritated: and turning to the Brahmin woman, she said in an angry tone—" If your body is scratched, will anything other than mere blood ooze out from that scratched part? Think of that, before you talk to me thus any more". This at once put

me in mind of that incident on the bank of the Ganges, which, according to tradition, led Śaṅkarāchārya to give out his beautiful and heart-enthralling *Manīshāpañchaka.* The story is that, on one occasion, when Śaṅkarāchārya was returning with his disciples from his bath in the sacred Gaṅgā, there appeared near them Śiva Himself in the guise of a *chaṇḍāla*, with the object of testing how firm and sincere the faith of Śaṅkarāchārya was in the philosophic conviction of the oneness of the Great Spiritual Reality constituting the universe. His disciples of course asked the *chaṇḍāla* to move away from their holy *guru ;* and strangely enough the *chaṇḍāla* put to the Brahmin, who directly ordered him with authority to move away, a puzzling question thus :---

अन्नमयादन्नमयं ह्यथवा चैतन्यमेव चैतन्यात् ।
द्विजवर दूरीकर्तुं वाञ्छसि किं तत्र मे ब्रूहि ॥

On listening to this question of the *chaṇḍāla*, who so cunningly wished to know whether it was the food-made body that had to be removed to a distance from another food-made body, or whether it was the all-pervading principle of consciousness that had to be moved away from another such principle of consciousness, Śaṅkarāchārya at once understood that *chaṇḍāla* to be a really wise seer and fell at his feet, declaring emphatically at the same time his own faith in the oneness of Reality and in the spiritual equality of all embodied beings of all sorts and conditions. The culmination of the wisdom of the *jñāna-yōgin* is, therefore, to know the truth regarding the soul and to put that truth into practice in his daily life. It consists in fact in his practical realisation of the spiritual equality of all embodied beings, and in his adjusting his own conduct of life so as to give therein a full and open expression to such a realisation. Evidently this expression of his inner realisation of spiritual equality in the external form of concordant conduct has to be quite spontaneous and natural; and it is in the spontaneity of this co-ordinated external expression of spiritual equality that we really have the means to understand as well as to measure the great ethical value of self-realisation. The effort of the successful *jñāna-yōgin* does not, however, stop with the achievement of self-realisation and the consequent sense of

equality in relation to all sorts of embodied beings : it must indeed lead him to higher results. And we are in fact told so in the next stanza.

इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद्ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥ १९ ॥

19. Here, in this very (life), those have conquered *samsāra*, whose mind is established in equality. Indeed, the *Brahman* is blemishless and the same (to all); therefore are they established in the *Brahman*.

I have here translated the Sanskrit word *sarga* by another Sanskrit word *samsāra*, for the reason that this latter word is more widely in use and is capable of being very much more easily understood. The primary meaning of *sarga* is creation ; and creation may mean manifestation, that is, the presentation of the unembodied in the embodied condition. From this it must be clear enough that we may appropriately apply the word to the process of the soul's recurring re-incarnation, which process, you know, is generally represented by the word *samsāra*. Therefore to conquer *sarga* is to conquer *samsāra* : and to conquer *samsāra* is to become free from the necessity of having to be born again and again and to die again and again. Thus you may see how the conquest of *samsāra* is the same thing as the attainment of *mōksha*. The statement, that those, whose mind is established in equality, conquer *samsāra* in this very life, means that the sinful blemish and binding taint of their *karma* are destroyed at once through their established sense of equality based on their self-realisation arising out of their faultless and enlightened spiritual vision. Ordinarily all embodied beings have to work out their *karma* slowly and step by step. In each life they work out, as you know, only the *prārabdha-karma;* that is, only that portion of the totality of their accumulated *karma*, which has just begun to be operative. But in the case of the *jñāna-yōgin*, who has succeeded in achieving self-realisation and has his mind established thereby in equality, all his accumulated *karma* becomes burnt at once into ashes in the fire of his well-kindled spiritual wisdom. It is on account of this that we have been told that, in the case of the successful *jñāna-yōgin*, all his impurities are removed wholly by means of his wisdom. This is simply another form

of expression to convey the same idea. Since the practical manifestation of the spiritual wisdom derived from self-realisation consists in the free and fearless application of the sense of equality to life and conduct, it follows as a matter of course that those, whose mind is seen from their conduct to be well established in equality, are indeed spiritually wise and have their soul-enslaving *karma* completely consumed into ashes. In fact that is how they conquer *samsāra* here and now in this very life.

Now let us take into consideration the latter half of this *ślōka*. You may remember that we found it distinctly declared, in a stanza in the previous chapter (IV. 35.), that that wisdom, which a person may learn from the wise seers of truth, enables him first of all to see all beings in himself and then to see himself as well as all beings in God. This evidently means, as you may know, that success in *jñāna-yōga* immediately gives rise to self-realistion and then to God-realisation. How the *jñāna-yōgin*, who has seen the truth and is therefore abundantly blessed with spiritual wisdom, may, after he has attained self-realisation, come to know that he is established in God Himself, is pointed out in this half of the stanza. With the attainment of self-realisation, two things happen to the *jñāna-yōgin;* he becomes free from all the impurities due to *karma* first, and is also blessed thereafter with that spiritual vision, which enables him to see that all beings are in reality like unto himself and like unto one another. The *Brahman*, you know, is the Infinite Being constituting the Supreme Soul of the universe, and forming as such the very foundation of its reality and life. This same *Brahman* may, if you like, be spoken of in ordinary English as God; and according to the philosophical ideas underlying Hinduism, it is not possible to think of any being as God, who is not *pūrṇakāma* as well as *satya-saṅkalpa*, as they express it in Sanskrit. This means that the God, whose will is not law and is not seen to be at once and of itself worked out into fact, is no God at all; and consequently God can never have any unfulfilled desires. His *satya-saṅkalpatva* implies his *pūrṇa-kāmatva;* that is, since His will happens to be always so effectively operative as to find expression at once in law and in fact, no desire of His can ever remain unfulfilled. Since He is, moreover, the All and the All-in-All in the universe, it is not at all possible for Him to be selfish in relation

to any being that is not comprehended within Himself. If all things in the universe are but parts of one stupendous whole, as an English poet has said, and if, of this one stupendous whole, God is in reality the soul, how then can God be selfish? In its very nature the life of God is the life of the All. Therefore, if ever the mind of any being happens to be altogether incompatible with and absolutely free from selfish desires, it must be surely that of God by its own nature. Thus it must be quite evident to you all that God cannot be polluted by *karma*; indeed He is altogether untouchable by its taint and is entirely free from all blemish. The purity and holiness of God are, as you may now see, the necessary concomitants of the all-including universality of His life and love. When we succeed in making out how all things in the universe live and move and have their being in Him, and how again He is immanent in all things in the universe, so as to control all of them from within and make every one of them what it really is,—when, in this manner, we come to realise fully that He lives in order that the innumerable millions of beings in the universe may live, each to play its appropriate part in duly hastening the coming on of that far off divine event to which the whole creation moves,—then, we cannot fail to see that His love is quite as universal as His omnipresent life. What wonder that we find it stated in this *ślōka* that the *Brahman* is always the same to all? This equality in the relation of the supreme *Brahman* to all the innumerable beings in the universe is so very obvious, that it is impossible for even the least thoughtful persons among us not to consider it to be an essential element in our conception of the divinity of God. Accordingly, we see that the soul of the successful *jñāna-yōgin*, in becoming free from all impurity and also becoming equal in its relation to all embodied beings, acquires two very important characteristics that are essentially divine.

Therefore it is that all such successful *jñāna-yōgins* are said to be established in the *Brahman*; that is, by their becoming like unto God in respect of these two notable characteristics, their abidance in the *Brahman* turns out to be abundantly well assured. There is ample room, as you must be aware, for difference of opinion regarding the exact nature of this abidance of released souls in God, who is indeed their final home. This abidance is considered by some thinkers to be the

same as absorption and essential identification; and all hallowed and liberated souls are hence conceived to become wholly absorbed into the essence of the one only God of everlasting holiness. Others consider that the abidance of hallowed souls in God means that they come into close and intimate association with Him and find their immediate support and everlasting life of bliss in Him. We need not now enter into any discussion regarding the question as to which of these two views about the abidance of souls in God is strictly true; because such a discussion will inevitably impose upon us the necessity of having to decide whether absolute monism, or qualified monism, or real dualism represents rightly the true conclusions of the *Vēdānta* philosophy. I confess that I am unable to decide with certainty how this sublime philosophy, which is embodied in our *Upanishads*, is to be labelled—whether it is to be looked upon as absolutely monistic, or qualifiedly monistic, or unqualifiedly dualistic. Moreover, I have been, from the very beginning, trying to steer clear of sectarian differences in interpreting the *Gītā* and expounding its lessons in our classes. From the stand-point of the study of what some metaphysicians call ontology, these sectarian differences regarding the nature and the naming of our *Upanishadic* philosophy are certain to prove to be highly interesting. But from the stand-point of the divinely ordered course of human conduct and morality taught in the *Bhagavadgītā*, they seem to me to be very unessential. Anyhow, what we have particularly to bear in mind here in this connection is the very great moral and spiritual and religious value attaching to our having the mind 'established in equality'. You know that the dawning of the spritual sense of equality in the mind of the wise seer is the result of the inner illumination of self-realisation culminating in the great glory of God-realisation. And yet the living of the life that is markedly dominated by the sense of equality is indeed far from impossible to those who are not successful *jñāna-yōgins*. Consequently, even though we have not all of us acquired the sense of equality as the natural result of an already achieved self-realisation, we are nevertheless bound in duty to live our lives so as to make the observance of the rule of equality decidedly dominant therein, since by means of such conduct self-realisation and God-realisation are capable of being well accomplished in the end. Who indeed does not know that differentiation really forms the basis of egoism in ethics, and that the sense of equality is

the sustainer of altruism? To me it seems that egoistic ethics simply regulates selfishness, while altruistic ethics positively encourages self-sacrifice and is well able even to destroy selfishness altogether. The aim of the ethics of the *Bhagavadgītā* is evidently the absolute annihilation of selfishness, in as much as it is declared therein that its annihilation is the only means for the attainment of the supreme good of soul-salvation. Accordingly, all those, whose mind is really well established in universal equality, may, here and now in this very life of theirs, destroy their bondage of *karma* and conquer *saṁsāra* so completely as to find at once their blissful home and everlasting refuge in God Himself.

XXVII

In our last class we were dealing with the great moral value of the sense of equality in the conduct of life. We learnt then that, if we look at man, not from the standpoint of his physical embodiment and social environment, but from the inner standpoint of the essential nature of his soul, we cannot help arriving at the conclusion that equality is the natural birth-right of all mankind, inasmuch as all souls are equal for the reason that they are all wholly alike in their essence. Nay more: souls embodied in forms other than human are also all alike in essence, and similar as well as equal unto those that are embodied in the human form. Our observation of equality has thus to run throughout the whole range of sentient existence. Some even maintain, owing to their belief in the all-pervading character of the soul, that this sense of equality has to include within its sphere of operation even inanimate and apparently non-sentient existence. Moreover, we have had to see at the same time that the embodiments of all beings are ultimately material in their essence. Therefore, neither from the standpoint of the essential characteristics of the soul, nor from the standpoint of the essential characteristics of the material of its embodiment, can any one being be really distinguished from any other. It is in fact the feeling of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*—the *ahaṅkāra* and *mama-kāra*—of beings which makes them believe that they are different from one another; and it is also this same feeling which makes them seem so different and varying to our ordinary vision as yet unblessed with the gift of comprehensive spiritual insight. If, in the case of all embodied beings equally, we take into our

consideration only the essential nature of their souls as well as of their embodiments, we cannot help coming to the conclusion that all souls are alike and that all bodies also are similarly alike in essence. In this way it may be seen that we have naturally to arrive at the conclusion that all beings are ultimately equal. To the wise man, who has achieved self-realisation and is in consequence well able to distinguish directly the soul from the non-soul, it must be very easy to perceive this equality. He sees it, even as clearly and as completely as we may see a concrete object held in our own hand. However, even to those, who have not actually achieved such self-realisation, it need not at all be impossible for any reason to arrive at the conclusion that there is really true wisdom in cherishing this idea of equality and also in acting in life in complete accordance with it. Logical analysis and rational speculation are both certain to give rise duly to the conviction that the idea of the universal equality of all beings rests ultimately on reality, and has therefore to be always the necessary ruling factor in the conduct of human life. Consequently, the more we people put this idea into actual practice, the more shall we be able to succeed well in realising for ourselves the truth and the reasonableness on which it rests. If it is as true, that to know the truth impels men to live their lives aright, as that to live the life aright enables them to know the truth, then surely it is fully justifiable to maintain that the actual working out in life of this idea of the equality of all beings is one of the most effective means by which it becomes possible for all of us to obtain the highest good of self-emancipation and God-attainment. That man, who has in this manner, through his free practical use of the spiritual sense of equality, come to know God and to perceive his own abidance in Him,—what kind of life should he, does he, live? This is a very natural question to ask in this connection; and the answer to it is, as it seems to me, given in the stanza with which we have to commence our work to-day.

न प्रहृष्येत् प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत् प्राप्य चाप्रियम् ।
स्थिरबुद्धिरसंमूढो ब्रह्मविद्ब्रह्मणि स्थितः ॥ २० ॥

20. He, who, having known the *Brahman*, is abiding in the *Brahman* and is undeluded and of firm

intelligence,—(he) should not feel elated with joy on obtaining that which is pleasing, nor should (he) feel distressed with grief on obtaining that which is not pleasing.

We have already seen how the realisation of the distinction of the soul from the non-soul is well calculated not only to produce the sense of equality in all seriously thoughtful and earnest persons, but also to impel them to put into practice in life their sense of equality so obtained. Using the requisite Sanskrit words, we may say that what is called *ātmānātma-vivēka* gives rise to the sense of *samatva* and tends to enforce it in life. When, through this *vivēka* or spiritual discrimination, a man has been enabled to live the life of equality, and has thereby been led to realise distinctly his own abidance in God, then, as we may well gather from this stanza, *vairāgya* or dispassionate disinterestedness comes to him as a matter of course. You know now that the fortunate spiritual aspirant, who has in practice realised fully the life of universal equality, becomes conscious of his own enduring abidance in God, by knowing that his own nature has, like that of God Himself, come to be blessed with perfect purity and with the unfailing and ever present apprehension of universal equality. That is what we learnt from the instructive stanza, with the study of which we closed the work of our last class. Accordingly, we ought to be able to see how he, who knows the *Brahman*, endeavours naturally to become full of purity and equality like the *Brahman*, so that he himself may thereby become established in the *Brahman*. The spiritual wisdom, which enables a man to distinguish clearly between the soul and the non-soul, takes away from him all the delusion which is due to the confounding of the non-soul with the soul. Who does not know that it is a delusion of the worst kind to consider the promptings of the flesh to be the promptings of the spirit? And in the case of the man, who is so deluded, it is obviously impossible for his intelligence to be firm and unyielding. That is, he may occasionally have glimpses of the truth, so as to be able for a few moments at least to discriminate the flesh from the spirit. But since he has not fully and effectively realised the distinction between the soul and the non-soul, his occasional glimpses of the truth are apt to become enshrouded in the thickening darkness due to the tendencies of the flesh. In other

words, that man, in whom the flesh is almost invariably stronger than the spirit, cannot always be undeluded regarding the true foundations of the appropriately established ethical conduct of life. But the seer of steady wisdom, in whom the spirit is necessarily stronger than the flesh and has in fact subjugated it completely, can never have his spiritual vision clouded. He cannot misunderstand either the true course or the true goal of conduct. It is in fact in the very nature of things that the fully opened eye of the spirit should never fail or falter in recognising the truth. Thus it is that the intelligence of him, who knows the *Brahman* and is abiding in the *Brahman*, is seen to be firm; that is, it is thus that his mind turns out to be unchangeable and unshakeable. Therefore, it is perfectly natural that the possession of the power of spiritual discrimination makes the owner thereof undeluded and enduringly intelligent in regard to the true meaning of life as well as in regard to the real nature of its goal.

You are sure to remember how, on various occasions, we have had to observe that it is very necessary for the man, who wishes to live the life of righteousness and absolute unselfishness, to rise above the influence of the pairs of opposites, such as pain and pleasure, and desire and aversion. What we know as *vairāgya*, or dispassionate disinterestedness, is not possible of attainment in the case of any person, who is prone to be easily influenced by these pairs of opposites, so as to feel that one of the two opposites in each pair is agreeable and hence desirable, and that the other is disagreeable and hence undesirable. Ordinarily, in the case of most people, pleasure is agreeable and pain is disagreeable; hence arises their desire to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. Such is in fact the origin of *rāga* and *dvēsha*, that is, of desire and aversion. The power of desire and aversion to pollute our nature with selfishness is so palpably evident, that it does not require any explanation of any kind to make it clear. Imagine this trinity, made up of desire and aversion and their offspring selfishness, operating upon human conduct, and see if their operation can at all tend to give rise to the large and liberal sense of unity and equality in the normal life, which we all, as human beings, have to live in society. There can be no doubt about the tendency of desire and aversion and selfishness being invariably in the direction of encouraging

differentiation and inequality; and these three qualities of the mind are therefore quite incompatible with the realisation of the sense of equality and its practical application to life. Thus arises the necessity that the knower of the *Brahman*, whose abidance is always in the *Brahman*, should not feel elated with joy on the attainment of what is pleasurable, and should not be agitated with grief on the attainment of what is painful. Indeed, in the case of the true knower of the *Brahman*, neither such elation of joy nor such agitation of grief is considered to be at all possible; the reality of his *vivēka* assures the certainty of his *vairāgya*. This necessary and inevitable association of *vairāgya* with *vivēka* tells us not only that the dispassion of *vairāgya* is a natural consequence flowing from tho discriminating *vivēka*, which distinguishes the soul from the non-soul, but also that the practice of *vairāgya* will of itself, under normal conditions, fill the heart with a real and living sense of universal equality, so as to cause the actually unselfish and dispassionate person to become such a true knower of the *Brahman* as always has his abidance assuredly in the *Brahman*. That conduct of life, which comes naturally and as a matter of course to the seer of steady wisdom, may not be capable of being easily imitated by those, who are weaker and less gifted with spiritual insight and mental firmness. Nevertheless, the endeavour to imitate such conduct is worth making by all; for undoubtedly in that way lies success in securing salvation.

Please let me tell you here very briefly a story which I heard, when I was a young lad, regarding a sagacious *guru*, who very cleverly managed to correct the vicious ways of a young disciple of his, who had till then been considered by almost every one to be incorrigibly bad. This disciple was a young man given to wicked ways of life, and all advice and admonition had proved utterly futile in putting even the smallest amount of rectitude or righteousness into his life. His parents, however, had noticed that he had an amount of very real respect for the holiness and religious piety and imperturbable calmness and wisdom and sincere good will of their family *guru*. They naturally wanted to bring the influence of the *guru* to bear upon the conduct of their wicked and recalcitrant son. Soon enough, the *guru* came to them on their earnest invitation; and the case of their son was duly represented to him in full in private, with the request that he

should do his best to correct the young man's conduct in life. The *guru* agreed to do his best, but did not begin the business at once in the usual manner of preaching hasty sermons on the indubitable sinfulness of sin and on the inevitability of all its ultimately sorrowful consequences. He stayed on in the house of the parents of the young man for some time, and took advantage of every opportunity to pour his genuine and warm love into the heart of his new disciple, who was very soon to be formally initiated by him into the religion of his parents. Thus the personal magnetism of the *guru* was induced to grow steadily in strength in relation to the young man, whose conduct in life stood in need of much correction and moral guidance. At last the ceremony of initiation was performed duly, and it was arranged that the *guru* was to start for his own village the next day. The original feeling of respect, which the young man had for the *guru* on account of his great reputation for holiness and spiritual wisdom, became very considerably strengthened by the new bond of love, which held in firm and agreeable union the hearts of both the holy preceptor and the admiring disciple. Then came the occasion for leave-taking before parting; and the disciple was sincerely affected with grief because the good *guru* was going away. When it came to be the turn of the young man to bid adieu to the *guru*, he took him aside for a few brief minutes and made him promise that, as surely as he had love and respect for his *guru*, he would under no circumstances tell anything like a lie. Thus was the axe laid at the root of all his misconduct in life. The young man, out of his sincere love and true respect for the *guru*, took very sedulous care to fulfill his promise to the *guru*, and was indeed in a very short time a prefectly reformed man. Vicious life can at no time and in no place flourish comfortably without the aiding and abetting alliance of sinful untruth in thought as well as in deed. To all thoughtful and observant persons this ought to be indeed as clear as day-light. Thus even this young man's moral incorrigibility wore away owing to its having had to rub against the unyielding adamantine rock of unswerving truthfulness. More than one lesson may very well be learnt from this story. But what I particularly want to draw your attention to now is, how it illustrates the inviolable correlation of the various moral qualities, which go to make up virtue and righteousness in the conduct of life. Well may we fasten our life to any one cardinal moral quality among them, and

thus secure the support of all of them to make our life completely pure and worthy of its high spiritual destiny. And how can anybody deny that *vairāgya* is one such cardinal moral quality?

बाह्यस्पर्शेष्वसक्तात्मा विन्दत्यात्मनि यः सुखम् ।
स ब्रह्मयोगयुक्तात्मा सुखमक्षयमश्नुते ॥ २१ ॥

21. He, whose nature is such as is unattached to external contacts, and who, therefore, finds (his) pleasure in (his own) self,— (he) has (his) soul devoted to the attainment of the *Brahman* and enjoys ever-lasting happiness.

How that sort of disinterested dispassion, which is altogether unmoved by pleasures and pains, may really enable one to attain the supreme bliss of soul-salvation and God-attaiment, is, I believe, very clearly pointed out in this stanza. From it we may easily learn that *vairāgya* is indeed a noteworthy cardinal moral quality, which is quite capable of making the aspirant attain by means of its power that salvation, which he is certain to aim at in the light of his truly discriminating spiritual wisdom. In fact, this quality of *vairāgya* is, as we shall soon see, mentioned in the very next chapter as an essential requisite for the successful practice of *yōga*, whereby self-realisation and God-realisation may both be actually achieved by all worthy aspirants. According to Patañjali also, as we may well learn from his *Yōga-sūtras*, this quality of disinterested dispassion is a very necessary pre-requisite for the attainment of true success in the practice of that known process of meditation and mental concentration which goes by the name of *yōga*. Before proceeding to point out how *vairāgya* is really conducive to the attainment of success in the continuous practice of meditation and mental concentration aiming at self-realisation and God-attainment, please let me draw your attention to what is meant in this stanza by a person being attached to external contacts. By the expression 'external contact' we have to understand here the contact of the perceiving mind with the external objects of perception. In the psychology, accepted by most old Hindu philosophers, perception is declared to be the result of the contact of the perceived object with the perceiving sense, and then of this sense with the *manas* or the faculty of attention. Thus in every case of ordinary perception, the *manas*

has to come into contact with external objects through the senses. If there is any truth in the idea that all our other senses are simply modified forms of the fundamental sense of touch, there is indeed very great appropriateness in denoting the sensations due to all our senses by the expression 'external contacts'. To be unattached to external contacts, therefore, means the same thing as to be unattached to the sensations of the senses; that is, to make the will entirely independent of the pleasures and pains which are invariably associated with those sensations. It must be within the experience of all of you, that ordinarily the will is so determined by pleasure and pain as to be very often nothing other than an inner mental impulse to seek pleasure and to avoid pain. To have the mind actuated by the idea of desirability in relation to pleasure, and by that of undesirability in relation to pain, is to be attached to the sensations of the senses, or to external contacts as they are called here. The state of the mind, in which it is unattached to external contacts, appears to me to be somewhat different from that other mental state, in which neither the experience of pleasure gives rise to an exaltation of joy, nor the experience of pain to an agitation of grief. This latter state fully presupposes the contrary conditions of the former state. What I mean is, that, if pleasure were not felt to be desirable, there would be no possibility of any exaltation of joy on our experiencing it. Similarly, if pain were not felt to be undesirable, there would be no possibility of any agitation of grief on our experiencing it. Nevertheless, the feeling of non-attachment to external contacts has to be slowly acquired in actual life, by means of the steady endeavour not to allow one's self to become elated with joy on the attainment of pleasure, or to become distressed with grief on the attainment of pain. Anyhow, it must be evident that, with the acquisition of the feeling of non-attachment to external contacts, one's *vairāgya* becomes fuller and more completely effective than ever before; and when such a feeling is, through the force of consciously and carefully guided habit, made to become the characteristic feature of a man's nature itself, then no external object will be capable of giving him any delight, and the outer world will have no attractions at all for him.

Therefore the man of fully perfected *vairāgya*, the operation of whose will is not at all determined by the influence of pleasures and

pains associated with sensations,—such a man may easily cause the introversion of his perceptual faculties, with a view to secure thereby the great spiritual blessing of self-realisation and God-realisation. In his case the established ineffectiveness of the influence, proceeding from the external world, in commanding his attention makes his mind absolutely free from all undesirable distraction; and it therefore becomes quite easily possible for him to turn his faculties of perception and attention inwards. When he does this, he really undertakes the practice of that *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, which is assuredly calculated to give rise in the end to self-realisation and through it to God-realisation. Even when the mind of the aspirant is made to be absolutely unattached to external contacts, as they have been called here, even then it is necessary to make a steady endeavour to turn its faculties inwards, if he wishes to practise the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. Indeed, without the steady exercise of strong will-power, the introverted concentration of the mind cannot be carried out for long; and without effectually carrying out such a concentration for long, self-realisation is generally impossible of attainment. If, however, success is attained in the endeavour to turn the mind inwards, it need not at all mean that life is thereby made into something which is altogether devoid of pleasure. We may gather from this *ślōka* that all our pleasures of life are not altogether derived from external contacts, and that the introverted vision of the mind is also capable of giving rise to a peculiar kind of highly enjoyable pleasure. This is in fact the pleasure which one may find in one's own soul. It is very often said that the spiritual delight of soul-realisation is quite unique and incomparably superior to even the most exquisite pleasures that are derivable from external contacts. And obviously it is this experience of the delight of soul-realisation, which has made all our great Indian seers and sages predicate in their philosophies blissfulness as an essential characteristic of the soul, a characteristic which is wholly intrinsic to the soul and is hence entirely independent of extraneous causes and conditions. Such a realisable intrinsic blissfulness of the soul naturally contradicts the view that there can be no pleasure or happiness in the mind which has not been introduced into it through the senses; and it is worthy of note that even modern European philosophy has begun to discard this view as defective and insupportable.

That fortunate aspirant, who, having acquired the power of being unattached to external contacts, alights upon the blissful experience of that rare and supremely delightful spiritual pleasure, which is derivable altogether from self-realisation, is indeed on the way to become still more fortunate and to acquire the peaceful beatific joy of infinite and everlasting happiness. He is undoubtedly progressing along the road which assuredly leads to the goal; and his experience of the supreme delight of soul-realisation is clearly indicative of his having reached, in his holy journey, a stage of advance, which is very near to the final destination of God-attainment. We may therefore say rightly that such a person has his whole soul devoted to the attainment of the *Brahman*. And when success crowns his efforts and he attains the *Brahman*, then the perception of the intrinsic blissfulness of his soul becomes infinitely exalted and altogether unchangeable. The pleasures of the senses are always apt to change and to pall; and even the great delight of soul-realisation may sometimes prove unenduring owing to the possible retrogression of the self-knowing aspirant in the hard and trying journey to the higher goal of God-attainment. But when this goal itself is reached, there is no returning therefrom; and the infinite spiritual delight then arising out of soul-realisation and God-realisation together has therefore to endure unchanged to the end of time. In other words, the happiness, which results from the attainment of the *Brahman*, has to be necessarily everlasting. By setting aside and discarding the changeable and unenduring pleasures of the senses thus, the successfully striving aspirant after salvation wins the everlasting happiness of soul-emancipation and God-attainment.

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते ।
आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः ॥ २२ ॥

22. Those enjoyments, which indeed result from (external) contacts,—(they) are undoubtedly sources of misery, and have a beginning and an end: (therefore), the wise man, O Arjuna, takes no delight in them.

The superiority of the enduring and unchanging pleasure, derived from self-realisation and God-attainment, to the pleasure that is born of the senses is clearly pointed out in this stanza. Since the pleasures

of the senses are due to the contact of external objects with the senses, it follows as a matter of course that no such pleasure can be had in the absence of the contact which gives rise to it. When the causal contact comes into existence, then the corresponding pleasure also comes into existence as its effect. Similarly, when the causal contact ceases, the corresponding pleasure also has to cease. The fleeting character of our sensations is very well known to all of us; and this is due to the fact that the objects, which come into contact with our senses, change rapidly from moment to moment. Accordingly, old contacts are broken quite as quickly as new ones are made in the rapid career of our evanescent sensations; and the enjoyments, which result from external contacts, happen thus to have a beginning as well as an end. This means that they are neither unchanging nor enduring, and are therefore inferior to the enjoyment of that spiritual bliss which results from the attainment of God. There is also another reason, as we are told here, why they are inferior to this enjoyment; and that is, that they are invariably seen to be sources of misery and unhappiness. Various indeed are the conditions that have to be taken into account in ascertaining whether, in any given case, the pleasures of the senses are actually enjoyed by a person,—such as the fitness of the object as a source of enjoyment, the physical health and capacity of the enjoyer to enjoy it, his mental attitude towards the enjoyment, and so forth. Even when all these conditions are favourable for a vigorous enjoyment of the pleasures of sense-contact, what happens is that, through their very continuance, they soon cease to please and give rise thereafter to all those sufferings which are the inevitable consquences of over-indulgence. Moreover, when the power to enjoy sense-pleasures wanes with the coming on and the gradual ripening of old age, then the poor personage, to whom their enjoyment formed, as it were, the highest good of life, gets into a very pitiable condition. His mental craving for them is certainly apt to continue unabated, even when his capacity to enjoy them is almost completely crippled. The torture of this unsatisfied and unsastisfiable hunger for the pleasures of sense-contact must surely be miserable beyond description. Nevertheless, there are those, who urge that life is short, and that, during its brief course, wise people must make the best of it by concentrating in it as much enjoyment of sense-pleasures as possible. Those, that live their life according to this ideal, rarely

manage to live long. And if those few rare persons among them, who have somehow succeeded in living long enough to attain old age, are induced to give us the result of what may be called their autobiographical self-analysis, so that we may ascertain from them their own estimate of the value of the life lived by them, then their description of their own biographical retrospect is certain to be so very full of sad heart-ache and sorrowful repentance as to make us gather easily therefrom that they consider their life to have been almost entirely wasted in the pursuit of painfully disappointing phantoms. It will thus be abundantly clear that the enjoyments, which result from external contact, are undoubtedly sources of misery.

From this we should not draw the inference that the enjoyment of pleasures is always bound to be a snare and a delusion, and that therefore it is necessary for us to keep back from it altogether, even at the risk of catching thereby the serious moral ailments arising out of cold apathy and callousness. Forced insensitiveness to pleasures and pains often tends to benumb the soul of human sympathy and charity, and cannot therefore be conceived to be capable of serving in any manner as an aid to the moral life of equality and loving service. It is surely not this kind of heart-hardening asceticism that is preached here. Śrī-Kṛishṇa has distinctly taught us that forced repression of normally natural propensities can do us no good; and we shall see, when we take up the seventh chapter of the *Gītā* (VII. 11.) for study, that therein He has actually identified Himself with such desire for pleasure as is unopposed to virtue and accords with the rule of righteousness. Consequently, the statement, that the wise man takes no delight in the pleasures of the senses, means, that he does not at any time look upon the enjoyment of those pleasures as constituting the supreme purpose of his life. It cannot and does not mean that he is bound to deaden his heart and repress by force all his natural feelings so as to become in consequence thereof an insensible and immobile misanthrope. Moreover, we have clearly to bear in mind that, in this context, we are as a matter of fact dealing with the relation of pleasure and pain to the successful practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration with a view to attain self-realisation and God-realisation. In the case of the aspirant, who undertakes the practice of such meditation and mental concentration, the tendency to take

any delight in any of the pleasures of the senses is certain to act as a troublesome source of distraction highly hurtful to the course of his steady meditation and well-sustained concentration of attention. In his case therefore it is a matter of very great necessity that he should not in the least be influenced by the common human tendency to take delight in the pleasures of the senses. It has, however, to be clearly borne in mind at the same time that success in the attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation, achieved through the practice of meditation and mental concentration, is certain to provide him with a joyous and invigorating internal delight urging him on to live the life of service and sacrifice and love. To discard the common pleasures of the senses, with the spiritual object of attaining self-realisation and God-realisation, cannot, therefore, produce in the end anything like the drying up of the fountain of love in the heart of the earnest aspirant, inasmuch as the natural effect of his achieving self-realisation and God-realisation is to open out a deeper and fuller fountain of sympathy and charity and love in his newly emancipated and illumined soul. There is in fact no danger at all of our ever seriously mistaking the callous and insensitive misanthrope to be a loving seer of superior spiritual culture and insight. It is evident that the light of self-realisation and God-realisation is not in any way sense-born; it is on the other hand seen to be purely soul-born and spiritual. Being such, it is certain to be experienced as an infinite and unending joy. To the seer, who has really acquired the power of experiencing this infinite and supreme joy of the spirit, the fleeting, finite and palling pleasures of the senses can surely bring no joyous satisfaction. That is why the wise man takes no delight in them.

शक्नोतीहैव यः सोढुं प्राक् शरीरविमोक्षणात् ।
कामक्रोधोद्भवं वेगं स युक्तः स सुखी नरः ॥ २३ ॥

23. (He), who, before giving up (his) body, is, here (in this very life) itself, able to withstand the forceful impulse that is born of desire and anger,—he is (the man) of *yōga*, he is the happy man.

The wise man, who takes no delight at all in the pleasures of the senses, is, of course, not apt to be tempted by them; nor is he

prone to suffer from any disappointment on account of not securing them. In other words, he is not actuated by any desire for any of the pleasures of the senses, and is not for that very reason likely to be made to grow angry through disappointed desire. In the ordinary life of mankind, the pleasures generally associated with sense-enjoyment make most people anxious to have more and more of those pleasures; and when the desire so roused in them is made to remain unfulfilled, they become angry with those whom they understand to be really responsible for its non-fulfilment. I am sure you all know very well with what great force desire impels most ordinary people to acquisitive action, and how terrific the explosive and aggressive manifestation of anger frequently is. That the impulse, which is born of such desire and such anger, is forceful, who indeed can seriously doubt? Do we not all of us know more or less from sad experience that it is indeed next to impossible to effectively withstand that highly forceful impulse? When, however, the final dissolution of the body takes place in due time, with the consequent disappearance of the senses, sense-pleasures also have inevitably to vanish. Then there can of course be no desire for them, no disappointment or anger in consequence of them. But in the embodied condition of the soul, sense-pleasures are not non-existent, and their power to despritualise life and make it sinfully selfish is in no way small or unaccountable. It is therefore a very great virtue to be blessed with the power to withstand the forceful impulse of desire and anger even when one is in the embodied condition. And whoever possesses this power may rightly be looked upon as a man of *yōga*. Let me explain how. You are all aware that the most common meaning of *yōga* is the practice of meditation and mental concentration with a view to enter into the state of *samādhi* and attain therein the valuable blessings of self-realisation and God-realisation. To the *yōgin* or the man of *yōga*, the reality of the soul and its distinctness from the body become thus matters of actual personal experience. He perceives directly in *samādhi* that the body is only an incidental appurtenance of the soul, and thereby becomes well convinced that it is material, mutable and mortal, while the soul which constitutes his basic reality is immaterial, immutable and immortal. When, after having acquired such a notable personal experience, he gets out of the state of *samādhi*, what kind of life is he apt to live in the midst of all our ordinary worldly

surroundings? So long as the outer worldliness of his surroundings cannot blot out from his mind the inner impression of his noteworthy experiences in the state of *samādhi*, it is impossible for him to get rid of the great conviction that his own essential reality is founded entirely upon the reality of his soul. Therefore, in the matter of regulating his conduct in society, we may well imagine him to say to himself—"My reality is in my soul. Accordingly, whatever is not good for my soul, that must I not do. The good of the soul consists in liberating it from the bondage of *karma* and the limitations of matter. Desire and anger are born out of the attachment to the pleasures of the senses, and are calculated to thwart the liberation of the soul. Hence I am bound to resist their impulse, however forceful it may be. Indeed, the strength of my soul is not certainly inadequate for the effort". So saying, he exerts aright the proved strength of his soul; and the result is that the stormy stress of desire and anger does not at all arise in his hallowed heart.

We may thus safely come to the conclusion that the heart, which is free from the stormy impulses of desire and anger and is in the enjoyment of the delightful repose and the serene calm of internal peace, is in itself quite worthy to be a true index of the really successful man of *yōga*. In saying this, I do not intend to convey to your minds the impression that, among those, who do not practise *yōga* and do not through it attain the state of *samādhi*, there can in fact be none, who is at all able to withstand the forceful impulses of desire and anger. I am well aware that it is sometimes fully possible to enforce, empirically from outside, the reign of calm peacefulness in the human heart, and that even such empirically enforced heart-calm may become, through continued maintenance, the strong basis of supreme spiritual blissfulness and also of that triumphant self-sacrifice, which is implied in universal love. I remember my having on a former occasion drawn your attention to the meaning of the life-story of Yayāti. That story shows the tendency of worldly desires to grow by indulgence, so as to become ultimately unsatisfiable altogether. The more a man nurses worldly desires in his heart, the greater is his liability to suffer from the painful sense of unsatisfied want. This sort of suffering is generally very keen, and gives rise to much unhappiness even in persons who are not of an extraordinarily

sensitive nature. In hot-blooded people, with a vigorous and actively agressive temperament, such a sense of unsatisfied want gives rise to anger. The greater the keenness of the suffering due to this sense of unsatisfied want, the more turbulent and aggressive does the anger become. And who does not know it as a fact of common human experience that anger does not and cannot help the wheel of life to move forward even by one inch? It is love that greases the wheel of life and propels it smoothly and noiselessly onward in the direction of that divine attainment which forms the true goal of all life. Anger is generally twice accursed; it always hurts him who is angry, and frequently enough hurts him also who is made to be its butt. Indeed the harm it does to the angry man himself is very serious and uniformly unfailing. Giving vent to anger poisons the very atmosphere of the mind, so as to make it impossible for any serene sense of undisturbed happiness to sprout up and grow therein. The man of *yōga* succeeds, as we have seen, in creating and sustaining within himself the power to withstand the very origination of the forceful impulses of desire and anger; and even he, who, not being a man of *yōga*, endeavours to cultivate within himself by enforced imitation the serenely imperturbable heart-calm of such a man, may succeed in making his mental atmosphere wholesome enough for the free growth of true and lasting happiness. Consequently, we have to gather from this stanza, that the best thing in the life of *jñāna-yōga* is to attain that self-realisation, which naturally tends to annihilate, spontaneously from within, the forceful impulses that are due to desire and anger, and that the next best thing is to strive, with the aid of the unyielding power of a strong and well-disciplined will, to live our lives as if we had fully attained such self-realisation, and thus withstand with calm courage and unbaffled effort the forceful impulses of desire and anger; for only in that manner can true and lasting happiness be won.

योऽन्तस्सुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥ २४ ॥

24. (He), whose pleasures and sources of delight are within (himself), and whose illumination similarly

is all from within (himself), he is the *yōgin*, who, becoming the *Brahman*, attains the bliss of the *Brahman*.

You may remember that, in a former stanza (V. 21.), we found it declared that the person who, being unattached to 'external contacts', obtains all his pleasures from within himself, is in fact devoted to the attainment of the *Brahman* and thus obtains everlasting bliss. The stanza just translated develops further the ideas contained therein. When may we say that a man really derives all his happiness from within himself? When a man's pleasures and sources of delight are all within himself, then such a man surely obtains all his happiness from within himself. So long as the idea that happiness is made up of the elements of pleasure and delight happens to be incontestable, there can be no doubt that, wherever a person finds his pleasures and his sources of delight, therefrom he obtains his happiness. To be able to find one's own pleasures and sources of delight in one's self, it is not enough for one merely to know that sense-pleasures due to 'external contacts' are fleeting and changeable; one has to realise in addition that there are purely internal pleasures and delights—pleasures and delights which are in no way dependent upon the process of perceiving external objects with the aid of the *manas* and its associated senses. The possibility of our so realising internal pleasures and delights is taken for granted here. It is evidently intended to be understood further that, even as it is possible for a man to find his pleasures and sources of delight within himself, it must also be possible for him to obtain all his illumination from within himself. This idea openly contradicts the position that, apart from the sense-perception of external objects, the mind is bound to be contentless and wholly unaware even of itself. You know that the principle of consciousness, which forms, as it were, the very material of the mind, is held in Hindu philosophy to be self-luminous. That is, it not only lights up to the mind the objects of the external world, but also makes itself visible to itself. Accordingly, even in the absence of the external world, the mind may very well be aware of itself, having itself for its own object. When the mind happens to be the knowing subject as well as the known object, then it is that one's illumination is altogether derived from within one's self. The chief aim of the true *yōgin's* practice of meditation and mental concentration is to enable

him to become aware of this condition of the mind as a fact of his own personal experience. There is no doubt that such an experience is both extraordinary and uncommon; but even the mere possibility of it cannot but be of very great importance to all thoughtful students of psychology. Associated with the internal apprehension of the self by the self-illumined mind, there always comes to the *yōgin* the delightful experience of an indescribable spiritual bliss, which is altogether instrinsic and has hence no connection whatever with the sense-perception of external objects. Therefore, he, whose pleasures are within himself and whose sources of delight are also entirely within himself,—he is the self-illumined *yōgin*, whose luminous self has succeeded in having itself for its illuminated object.

Such a self-delighted and self-illumined *yōgin* has been declared to be capable of attaining indestructible and everlasting bliss; and this bliss is mentioned here to be the bliss of the *Brahman*. It is also worthy of note that we are told here that one has to become the *Brahman* before one really attains the bliss of the *Brahman*. In other words, none other than those, who have become the *Brahman*, are capable of attaining the bliss of the *Brahman*. And we are clearly given to understand here that the successful *yōgin*, who has come to be entirely self-delighted and self-illumined, becomes the *Brahman* as a matter of course. The idea of becoming the *Brahman* is evidently expressed here by the word *Brahma-bhūtaḥ*; and its meaning in the context is worthy of our careful attention. Śaṅkarāchārya interprets it as इह जीवन्नेव ब्रह्मभूतः सन्—that is, as 'having become the *Brahman* even while alive here'. Another commentator understands that the word indicates the unlimited condition of the mind of the *yōgin*, who has attained self-realisation and God-realisation. It is clear, in any case, that the word does not in this context refer to the soul in its condition of final freedom and supreme blissfulness called *mōksha*. Here, to become the *Brahman* is to become free, as far as possible, from those limitations, which are imposed upon the soul in consequence of its being imprisoned in a material body. That the self-realisation and God-realisation, which so give rise to self-delightedness and self-illumination, are well able to bestow on one this kind of freedom from limitations to a very large extent, must certainly be easily intelligible to you all. The *Advaitins* speak of the person, who

has acquired such freedom from limitations, as a *jīvanmukta;* and all *Vēdāntins* believe that the successful *yōgin*, who has attained self-realisation in *samādhi*, happens to be, as a matter of necessity, blessed with such freedom. And now what is the bliss of the *Brahman*, which such a person is so enabled to enjoy? I conceive that the most rational interpretation of this bliss of the *Brahman* is to make it denote that bliss which one will naturally enjoy through the realisation of the *Brahman*. That there is such a thing as the joy of self-realisation, we have been already taught: and we know that the *Vēdānta* believes *ānanda* or bliss to be an essential characteristic of the soul. Similarly, an *ānanda*, which is in fact intrinsic and absolute joy, is taught therein to be among the essential characteristics of the *Brahman* also. Accordingly, there must be joy in God-realisation as well. Evidently the joy, which arises from self-realisation, is the outcome of the bliss, which is thus considered to be an essential characteristic of the soul itself, even as the joy which arises from God-realisation is the outcome of the bliss, which forms an essential characteristic of the *Brahman*. Hence the attainment of the bliss of the *Brahman* may well be the attainment of that joy which naturally flows out of the realisation of the *Brahman*. He, who has all his illumination from within himself, and whose pleasures and sources of delight are all within himself, has of course discarded the external world as a source of light and joy. But this does not mean at all that he is on that account compelled to be lightless and joyless. On the other hand, his light is the limitless and all-comprehensive light of the unenslaved soul, and his joy is the all-perfect and holy joy due to the divine vision of wisdom and truth and love. The power and the beauty of the spirit make themselves most markedly manifest, when the force of the flesh is annihilated; and it is no wonder that, out of the sacrifice of the pleasures of the senses, there comes into being that infinite and everlasting joy, which is unmixedly spiritual and absolutely divine.

लभन्ते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्मषाः ।
छिन्नद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥ २५ ॥

25. Those spiritual seers, whose impurities have (all) been destroyed, who have cut off (all) doubt and

are characterised by self-control, and who are lovingly devoted to (the accomplishment of) the good of all beings,—(they) attain the bliss of the *Brahman.*

Please note that the word *ṛishayaḥ* occurring in this stanza is translated as 'spiritual seers'. A *ṛishi* is a seer of perfected spiritual vision. The perfection of his spiritual vision and his insight into the truth of things need not be necessarily the result of his success in the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. Such a vision may in his case be also a natural gift and a divine blessing. In fact it is the gifted seer of this kind of divine inspiration, who is generally called a *ṛishi.* The divine gift of spiritual vision is, as you may see, apt to be bestowed only on those who are fit to receive it, that is, on those whose inner light is not at all obscured by the thick dark veil of *karma.* In other words, those, whose impressed impurities due to *karma* are not entirely destroyed, can never become *ṛishis;* the divine gift of true spiritual vision cannot be their natural portion. To such as are still subject to the pollution of *karma,* the soul will not reveal itself, nor surely will God reveal Himself. Accordingly, the seers, to whom the soul and God come to be spontaneously revealed, cannot but be absolutely free from the polluting taint of *karma.* It is evidently worthy of note here that those, who succeed in the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, so as to attain self-realisation and God-realisation, may also be very well looked upon as spiritual seers. But all those, who are blessed with the gift of seership need not have acquired their spiritual vision through such *yōga.* A successful *yōgin* may well become a *ṛishi ;* and a *ṛishi* may have become a *ṛishi* even otherwise than through the attainment of success in the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. Anyhow, the seership of the *ṛishi* is, as you may all make out at once, quite incompatible with the existence of any doubt in his mind or heart ; and therefore those that have become spiritual seers have had, in the very process of becoming such seers, to cut off all their doubts. This means that the reality of the soul and the reality of God are both matters of truth and personal experience to them. Therefore, there is no possibility of their entertaining even for a moment what may well be called *dēhātma-buddhi ;* they

cannot mistake the body for the soul, nor can they ever understand the tendencies and promptings of the flesh to proceed from the spirit. The consequence of this is that they are very naturally impelled to acquire the power of self-control. To them the spirit is certain to appear to be very much more in importance than the flesh. In the light of the enduring reality of the soul and the consequent urgency of achieving its salvation, the demands of the body, even if supported by all its possible pleasures, must surely sink into insignificance. Thus sense-pleasures and the satisfaction of physical appetites cease to be indulged in for their own sake; and stern unfailing self-control becomes a normal factor in the life of all spiritual seers. And there is another equally natural result of their seership, to which also our attention is directed in this stanza. That other result is the sense of *samatva* or equality in relation to all embodied beings,—a sense, arising out of the realisation of the essential similarity of all their enshrined souls. This sense of equality imposes on the seers the obligation to be devoted to the accomplishment of the good of all beings. With the vanishing of the sense of difference between one being and another, the very foundation of *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*—that is, of the feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*—is certain to become completely undermined. More than even this, the sense of *samatva*, when it happens to be real and living, irresistibly impels those, who have it, to engage themselves freely in the service of man and also in the service of all other beings in the universe. Such spiritual seers, as have all the natural and necessary qualifications mentioned in this stanza, find their delight in doing good to others. Their pleasure consists in seeing others pleased, and their happiness in making others happy. Hence, in spite of their being self-illumined, they are not exclusively self-delighted. Anyhow, they are said to be able to attain the bliss of the *Brahman*. If so, what does it mean? To my mind it means that devotion to the service of man is the most natural and the most appropriate culmination, to which both self-realisation and God-realisation inevitably lead all those, who have become blessed with them either spontaneously as a divine gift or through the effort of *yōgic* meditation. Let us therefore always bear in our minds that that is a safe and sure road which leads from service to salvation, but that it is a road along which one's progress becomes seriously barred, if one gives vent to selfishness, envy, hatred or any other

similarly harmful feeling. The seer is a seer not only because he sees, but also because he serves.

कामक्रोधवियुक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥ २६ ॥

26. To those striving aspirants, who are free from desire and anger, whose mind is (well) controlled, and who have attained self-conquest,—(to them) the bliss of the *Brahman* is close at hand on all sides.

You know that we have been already told in the course of today's lesson that he is indeed the happy man of *yōga*, who is able to withstand here in this very life the forceful impulses of desire and anger. In the stanza, which I have just read and translated, we are told that to such a man the securing of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment is quite easy. This evidently means that such a happy man of *yōga* is so happy, because he is, through his conquest of desire and anger, very well fitted to attain the bliss of the *Brahman*. We have seen how the conquest of desire and anger happens to be an unfailing index of the reality of the self-knowledge possessed by the successful *yōgin* as well as by the inspired seer. And if, to these persons, the infinite bliss of soul-salvation and God-attainment comes as a matter of course, it need not follow therefrom that those persons, who are neither successful *yōgins* nor inspired seers, can have no hope of securing such salvation. It is no doubt true that getting into the state of *samādhi*, either through the successful practice of *yōga* or through the divine gift of inward vision and inspiration, is the only means, by which one may obtain, in the form of direct personal experience, a positively satisfactory proof of the supreme reality of the soul. There is, as you know, no other way of proving this so conclusively to one's complete satisfaction. Of course it is not meant to convey by this that there is no other proof of the soul at all. You may remember how, from the last two stanzas of the third chapter of the *Gītā*, we were able to make out the outline of an analytical psychological process of proving the soul, which process led us to gather quite logically that the basis of the individual's sense of unity in relation to all his own experiences in life and thought can be nothing othe

than the spiritual entity commonly denoted by the word soul. Indeed, if we do not believe in the existence of the soul as a reality, none of us can unify our experience, or individualise our existence. But no proof, howsoever highly rational and logically accurate it may be, can be equal to the proof of direct perception in point of what may be called its convincing force. To say this is, of course, certainly not the same thing as saying that, unless one arrives at self-realisation through direct perception in the state of *samādhi* or through the seer's ecstatic vision in his exalted mood of inspiration, one cannot attain the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. Such evidently is not the opinion of Śrī-Kṛishṇa. Every one cannot make of himself a successful *yōgin*, nor is every one born with the divine gift of spiritual seership. Nevertheless, it is within the province of all people to strive to attain the salvation of *mōksha* by living the life of duty without attachment to the fruits of work. What is therefore naturally expected of all those persons, who are neither successful *yōgins* nor spiritually inspired seers, is that they order their lives in accordance with the truth which is realised by those who are *yōgins* or seers. In fact this stanza tells us this very thing; and we are to understand therefrom that he, who can, in this very life of his, withstand the forceful impulses of desire and anger, is not only the happy man of *yōga*, but is also one to whom the attainment of the bliss of the *Brahman* is easily within reach. His very title to be looked upon as the happy man of *yōga* is dependent upon this easy availability of the bliss of the *Brahman* to him.

Please let me draw your attention to the fact that I have translated the Sanskrit word *yati*, occurring in this stanza, as a 'striving aspirant'. I am aware that *yati* is ordinarily understood to be synonymous with *sannyāsin*, and therefore denotes the person who has entered into the fourth order of Hindu religious life and has become a mendicant monk marked by renunciation, unworldliness and God-ward endeavour. This meaning of *yati* cannot be adopted here; for, if we did so, we would be making the context imply that the salvation of *mōksha* is available only to successful *yōgins*, to seers and to *sannyāsin* monks. Placing such a notable limitation upon the availability of *mōksha* is wholly against the spirit of the *Bhagavadgītā*, and is emphatically contradicted by the views given expression

to by Vyāsa thereon throughout the *Mahābhārata*, from a careful study of which we cannot fail to learn that, according to him, every person is entitled to the attainment of salvation, provided he or she lives duly and well the life of appropriate duty with no attachment whatsoever to the fruits of work. The idea that a person should become a *sannyāsin* or *bhikshu*, before he is actually fitted for the attainment of salvation, is very probably of Buddhistic origin; and though accepted by some schools of later Hindu theological thought, it cannot be attributed to Śrī-Kṛishṇa without doing violence to the all-comprehensive catholicity of the plan of salvation propounded by Him for the benefit of all mankind. Moreover, in that stanza, which we went through a little while ago, and wherein it is declared that that person, who withstands successfully the forceful impulses of desire and anger, is truly the happy man and the man of *yōga*, we are not told that, for deserving this privilege, he should be beforehand a mendicant monk who has renounced the world. Whether a man is a *sannyāsin* or not, if he is able to withstand successfully the impulses of desire and anger, he becomes entitled to be looked upon as a real man of *yōga* and is certain to become a truly happy man. Naturally, therefore, all those, who are free from the banefully selfish feelings of anger and desire, must, irrespective of their being *sannyāsins* or no *sannyāsins*, have it freely in their power to attain the bliss of the *Brahman*. Otherwise, they cannot all be the happy men of *yōga* they are entitled to be. Further, an authoritative commentator on the *Gītā* interprets यतीनाम् here as यतनशीलानाम्, and this interpretation supports well, as you may indeed easily see, our translation of *yati* as a 'striving aspirant'. The aspirant, who strives well and succeeds in acquiring mental control and in obtaining self-conquest, cannot of course be touched even to the slightest extent by the baneful influence of selfishness, which is invariably engendered as well as encouraged and fostered by the feelings of desire and anger. The possession of such self-mastery, as is implied by the complete control of the mind and the consequent sense-conquest, is utterly incompatible with the tendency to be carried away by the impulses of desire and anger: and this kind of self-mastery rarely comes to any one without strenuous and continued endeavour to acquire it. It is therefore really required in the context that the word *yati* should denote the person, who steadily puts forth the needed effort to acquire that

self-mastery, which enables him to withstand effectively the forceful impulses of desire and anger. Surely, I need not tell you that the self-conquest, which contributes to such self-mastery, means nothing less than coming into full possession of the truly indomitable spiritual power of the soul. As against this power, well secured and effectively exercised, no temptation of any kind can assert itself. And is it any wonder that to him, who has risen above all temptations thus, the salvation of *mōksha* and the associated bliss of the *Brahman* are close at hand on all sides? Wheresoever he lives, whatsoever may be the condition or form of life he adopts, and indeed whosoever he may happen to be by race or birth or creed or colour, to him, on account of his fully well established power to rise completely above all temptations, the bliss of the *Brahman* is bound to be easily available, irrespective altogether of the way in which he may have acquired this valuable power of making all temptations quite futile. The power may have come to him through the practice of *yōga*, or through the inspired vision and moral strength of the gifted seer, or through the steady endeavour to attain self-mastery in the normal course of common human conduct in common human society. In any case the bliss of the *Brahman* belongs to him by right.

स्पर्शान् कृत्वा बहिर्बाह्यांश्चक्षुश्चैवान्तरे भ्रुवोः ।
प्राणापानौ समौ कृत्वा नासाभ्यन्तरचारिणौ ॥ २७ ॥
यतेन्द्रियमनोबुद्धिर्मुनिर्मोक्षपरायणः ।
विगतेच्छाभयक्रोधो यः सदा मुक्त एव सः ॥ २८ ॥

27—28. Keeping out 'external contacts', directing (the vision of) the eyes to the middle (point) between the eye-brows, and making the in-going and the out-going breaths move through the inside of the nose and be equal (in duration), whoever happens to be a silent meditator, that has (his) senses and faculty of attention and faculty of intellection under control, and is devoted to soul-liberation as the highest object of attainment, and has got rid of desire and fear and anger,—he is indeed a liberated person at all times.

In the lecture dealing with the concluding part of the second chapter of the *Gītā*, wherein I gave a summary of the main teachings contained in that chapter, *dhyāna-yōga* or the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration was pointed out, if my memory is right, to be an essential feature in the ground-plan of the philosophy of conduct taught by Śri-Kṛishṇa. I believe I said then that *dhyāna* is not only helpful to the living of the righteous life of self-control and unselfish love and service, but is also capable of giving rise to the illumination of *jñāna* leading to the realisation of soul and God and truth. The two stanzas, which I have just read and translated, treat of that *dhyāna-yōga*, as a means for the attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation. Indeed *dhyāna-yōga* in the *Bhagavad-gītā* means the same thing as the *ashṭāṅgayōga*, or *yōga* of eight constituent limbs, which is systematised by Patañjali in his *Yōga-sūtras*. This same *yōga* is also spoken of sometimes as *Rāja-yōga*, for the reason that it is conceived to be the best of the *yōgas*. It may also be that it is called the 'king of *yōgas*', because it develops certain wonderful occult powers and happens to be at the same time the most direct means for the assured attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation. Its being called *dhyāna-yōga* in the *Bhagavad-gītā* seems to be obviously due to the fact that *dhyāna* or meditation is in fact the most important among its eight constituent limbs, which, as you know, are *yama* (internal self-control), *niyama* (external regulation of conduct), *āsana* (bodily posture in sitting), *prāṇāyāma* (control of breathing), *pratyāhāra* (withdrawal of the senses from external objects), *dhāraṇa* (fixing the attention), *dhyāna* (meditation), and *samādhi* (concentrated realisation). In these two stanzas we are told that, if a man keeps the perception of external objects outside the sphere of his consciousness, if he directs the vision of his eyes to the midpoint between the eye-brows, if he makes his breathings-in and breathings-out steady and equal in duration and takes care to see that they pass through the nostrils but not through the mouth, if he manages to have his senses and his faculties of attention and intellection completely under his control, if he is further a silent meditator devoted to the attainment of soul-liberation as the highest object of human pursuit, and is characterised by such dispassion and non-attachment (*vairāgya*) as make it impossible for him to be influenced by desire or fear or anger, then we may well take it that he has the salvation of

soul-emancipation and God-attainment always at his disposal. The idea intended to be conveyed here is evidently that, in the case of such a man, the endeavour to attain salvation will never prove vain or markedly barren of results. To start on such a road of endeavour is in fact to make sure that the goal is reached, so that, at whatever stage of the journey the aspirant may be found, we cannot be wrong in holding that he is almost as good having reached the goal. I daresay it is clear to you all that the *aṅgas* or the constituent limbs of the *ashṭāṅga-yōga* are all more or less distinctly referred to in these stanzas. We are moreover told here that, in order that the practice of *dhyāna-yōga* may assuredly lead to the attainment of the final beatific freedom resulting from self-realisation and God-realisation, it is necessary that the aspirant engaged in the practice of this *yōga* should be so characterised by dispassion and non-attachment as to be entirely free from desire and fear and anger, and should also be devoted altogether to securing the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment as constituting the highest object of human pursuit. According to Patañjali, *vairāgya* is an inevitable prerequisite for the attainment of success in the practice of *yōga* ; and the dispassion and non-attachment implied in *vairāgya* make it impossible for him, who is well in possession of it, to be actuated by desire or fear or anger. This is indeed so true that a person's freedom from desire and fear and anger forms a sure index of his being really endowed with *vairāgya*. And it is also known that, among those, who undertake the practice of *yōga*, there are some whose aim is not the attainment of salvation through self-realisation and God-realisation, but may be some such thing as the acquisition of those occult powers which go by the name of *siddhis*. You are aware, I believe, that eight *siddhis* are declared to be capable of being acquired through the practice of *yōga* ; and devotion to these shunts off the aspirant to a branching side-line, as it were, on the road of *yōga*, and makes it impossible for him to go to the true goal of the journey. The possibility of acquiring these occult powers is indeed a temptation which besets the aspirant on the way; and unless he overcomes it and discards the *siddhis*, he cannot, as the result of his *yōgic* endeavours, win the supreme salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. That is why he is called upon here to be solely devoted to the attainment of this salvation ; and I am sure that none of you have failed

to make out the great value of this fore-warning which is given to the aspirant here.

Certain modern physiologists and psychologists are known to have declared that this *dhyāna-yōga* is merely a process of self-hypnotisation. The directing of the vision of the eyes to the mid-point between the eye-brows is generally recognised now to be a means of inducing hypnotism by causing the required nerve-strain to the eyes. Granting that the *dhyāna-yōga*, which really culminates in the attainment of *samādhi*, is scientifically a process of self-hypnotisation, the question we have actually to ask is—whether the *samādhi* state of self-hypnotisation is in any way calculated to throw any valuable light on the nature of the mind as well as on the problem of the reality of the soul. By giving a modern scientific name to this old process of *yōga*, we certainly do not take away anything from its true import and value as a crucial psychological experiment. We may easily give a dog a bad name and then hang it, as they say. But even an effective scientific name cannot deprive the practice of *yōga* of its special psychological value. Some think that the good scientific name often gives an explanation of the thing to which it is quite scientifically given. Let it be so: we need not quarrel with those, who hold such an opinion. Whatever may be the explanation of *yōga-samādhi*, which is suggested by calling it a condition of self-hypnotisation, the fact that, in that condition, the *yōgin* is blind to every external object and has, as it were, the door-way of his senses completely closed against the external world, and that, nevertheless, the interior of his mind is neither dark nor void but is full of the shining light of concentrated awareness, cannot but tell its own interesting tale regarding the nature of the mind and also the reality of the soul. I believe you know that even pathological conditions of the mind are considered by psychologists to be capable of proving helpful in ascertaining the nature and functions of the mind; and doctors dealing with insanity are known to have made notable contributions of value to the science of psychology. Moreover, modern hypnotic researches have themselves opened up many new and interesting fields for examination by the psychologist; and through the results of those researches modern mental science has had to assume an altogether new aspect. We may call *samādhi* a state of trance or a condition of self-hypnotisation, just as we like;

whichever it is, its very possibility is enough to deal the death-blow to the school of thought, which maintains that the mind is made up entirely of sense-perceptions as its ultimate basis, and that in their absence it would be contentless and unaware even of itself. The *yōga* school of thought is very ancient and seems to be peculiarly Indian in origin; and it maintains that, in the state of *samādhi*, the *yōgin* manages to have his own self as the object of his conscious mental experience, and thus comes to know himself. This experience of his, wherein the knowing subject has itself for its known object, naturally leads him to see what it is that constitutes his basic reality. His self-realisation so secured fixes for him once for all the goal of life, and also determines for him the line as well as the nature of the life which will take him to that goal. More than even this, the light of self-realisation is understood to be capable of revealing God Himself to the unobscured inner vision of the *yōgin*. Therefore there can be no doubt that *dhyāna-yōga* is well calculated to serve as a sure and helpful means for the attainment of that divine wisdom or *jñāna*, which delivers the soul from its age-long bondage of *karma*, conferring upon it the blessing of final emancipation and God-attainment.

भोक्तारं यज्ञतपसां सर्वलोकमहेश्वरम् ।
सुहृदं सर्वभूतानां ज्ञात्वा मां शान्तिमृच्छति ॥ २९ ॥

29. He understands Me to be the Enjoyer of (All) Worships and Austerities, to be the Great Lord of All the Worlds (and) the Friend of all Beings, and then attains peace.

The person, who, being fit for the adoption of the life of *karma-sannyāsa* or renunciation of works, seeks to attain self-knowledge and salvation through the inner illumination resulting from the successful practice of *yōga*, is, as we have been told, undoubtedly travelling along the road that unfailingly leads to the goal. And when he reaches the goal, what does he realise and what does he attain? We are told in this stanza that he realises God and attains peace. By what process and in what manner he comes by God-realisation, we shall be able to learn well from the concluding portion of the next chapter. Here we are given to know that the peace

which comes from God-realisation—the peace which, as they say, passeth all understanding—is the supreme good for man to attain, and that such peace comes to him only through God-realisation. Hence the culmination of the *yōgin's* undeviating introspective endeavour is not in coming to know the self merely, but in coming to know God also, who is the Great Lord of All the Worlds and the Friend of All Born Beings and is also the Enjoyer of All Worships and the Aim of All Austerities. It is well known to students of comparative religion that this comprehensive conception of God has not prevailed at all times in all religions. The Jewish people, for instance, looked upon themselves for long as the chosen people of the Lord, and Jehova was accordingly only the God of the Jews. Similarly Ahura Mazda was the God of the ancient Iranians, even as Zeus was the God of the Greeks, Jupiter was of the Latins, and Indra of the Vedic Indian Aryas. Such special Gods of special peoples have also had their geographical limitations. King David of the Jews, for instance, was prohibited from conducting the worship of Jehova outside the tribal territory of the Jews ; the worship of Zeus was obviously intended to be confined to Hellas proper ; and to us India—or Bharata-khaṇḍa as we call it—is still our *karma-bhūmi* (the land of worship) and *puṇya-bhūmi* (the holy land), even as Palestine continues to be the holy land for the Jews and the Christians, and Arabia for the Mussulmans. But to the *jñāna-yōgin*, who, through the appropriate practice of concentrated *dhyāna*, attains self-realisation and rises from self-realisation to God-realisation. God reveals Himself in no such partial or limited light. He understands God to be the Great Lord of All the Worlds and the Friend of all Born Beings. A careful study of the historical progress of religion, as associated with the advancement of civilisation and of the humanity of man, is certain to enable us to see that almost every one of the well known great religions of the world is more or less markedly characterised by the tendency to get rid of narrow, national and geographical limitations so as to become a universal religion. And in a really universal religion, God cannot be anything less or other than the Great Lord of All the Worlds and the Friend of All Born Beings. Thus we may see that what mankind slowly learns, through ages of historic struggle and experience, the successful *yōgin* learns at once through his well-regulated practice of meditation and mental concentration ; and his God is indeed in no

way different from the God, whom it is the privilege of the most perfected human understanding to comprehend and to worship.

I have no doubt that you will all see at once that such a universal conception of God cannot be complete and consistent with itself, unless it is made to include within its range the idea of what may be called the 'brotherhood of religions'. The God who is the Great Lord of All the Worlds and the Friend of All Born Beings cannot be biassed or exclusive in His revelation of Himself. To him there can be no chosen people, and His natural and necessary universality cannot tolerate the claim of any religion to be the only true and divine religion. Such a universal God, as is thought of here, must necessarily have His witnesses among all peoples, these witnesses proclaiming His glory each according to his own light and also according to the needs of the particular situation in history and civilisation wherein his lot is cast. In other words, the God, who is the God of All, cannot but proclaim well like Śri-Kṛishṇa—'Men everywhere and in all manner of ways follow My path'. I know that there are some critics, who see in the open recognition of this all-inclusive doctrine of the brotherhood of religions, and in the spirit of comprehensive toleration which it involves, nothing more than a mere molluscan softness and shapelessness in the religion which adopts that doctrine as one of its foundation principles. The God realised by the *jñāna-yōgin* being impartially the God of All Beings, the doctrine of the brotherhood of religions cannot be set at naught without doing violence to the universal prevalence and pervasiveness of the power as well as the love of God. It seems to me that to deny the impartial equality of God's love amounts to denying the very godhood of God. Therefore, an unchangeable fixity of shape and an unyielding and unaccommodating rigidity of structure in relation to a religion cannot make it truer or its God more worthy to be God as He is. If we understand this well, we may make out at once the meaning of the statement that the *jñāna-yōgin's* God is the Enjoyer of All Worships and Austerities. The God, who is the 'Father of All in every age in every clime adored', must of course be the receiver of all worship, whether it be offered to Jehova or Jove or Alla or Śiva or Vishṇu. The enjoyer of any worship is he, to whom that worship is offered, and who, therefore, forms the intended object of that act of adoration.

Similarly, the enjoyer of austerities is he, in relation to whom austerities are practised, and who, therefore, forms the supreme end to be attained with their aid. It is in this sense that the word *bhōktā*, meaning enjoyer, is used in this context. Hence, when it is said that God, as realised by the *jñāna-yōgin*, is the enjoyer of all worships, it means that all religious worship, conducted in whatsoever manner and offered to whichsoever deity, is in fact ultimately offered to that one only God, who is the Great Lord of all the Worlds and the Friend of All Born Beings. Such a God has also to be the enjoyer of all austerities, inasmuch as all those, who practise austerities with a view to make their lives worthy of the attainment of what they believe to be the highest good, do in fact aim at attaining Him, because He alone happens to be the Highest Good. With such a broad and comprehensive conception of God, the *yōgin* is bound to be a believer in the brotherhood of religions; and from his standpoint all religions are true, each in its own way, and no religion is absolutely false or futile. In these modern days it has become a rather common theological thought to look upon the step by step evolution of nature, and upon the associated evolutionary development of material as well as moral progress, as clear indications of the method of God's government of the universe; and accordingly all roads of progress—religious progress not excepted—necessarily lead to what is, in the beautiful language of the poet, 'that far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves'.

That such is the import of this stanza is fully borne out by the comprehensive significance which the *Gītā* gives to the terms *yajña* and *tapas*, interpreted here as 'worship' and 'austerity' respectively. How, by *yajña*, all forms of worship have to be understood, became clear to us in the course of our study of the fourth chapter (IV. 23-33.). There we learnt that various material, moral and mental forms of worship deserve to be denoted by the word *yajña*, so that all forms of worship belonging to all religions may happen to be comprehended within its significance. We have a similarly comprehensive explanation of *tapas* given to us in the seventeenth chapter of the *Gītā* (XVII. 14-16.), where there is a classified enumeration of the various forms of *tapas*. I believe you know what we ordinarily understand by *trikaraṇa* in the Sanskrit language. This expression denotes the

three instruments of action appertaining to the soul, as understood by Hindu psychologists, namely, mind, language and body. Though instruments of the soul, these are capable of often operating wrongly so as to thwart the fulfilment of the true destiny of the soul. To learn to check the unhappy tendency of these instruments to overpower their owner, so that they may not cause that same owner to become bewildered in regard to the aim of life,—this is to practise *tapas*, as the *Gītā* evidently understands it. Who among us does not know that the mind, the tongue and the body have all their tempting tendencies? To yield to their temptations is to court the corruption of conduct through the destruction of righteousness consequent upon the ruin of selflessness. The infelt heat of effort in restraining and guiding aright the mind and the tongue and the body, so as to make them serve as fit and worthy tools at the disposal of the masterful will, always intent upon securing the salvation of the soul, is thus the true meaning of *tapas*; and the *Gītā* mentions accordingly all the various things that may respectively be looked upon as constituting the 'austerity of the body,' the 'austerity of speech', and the 'austerity of the mind'. The *Gītā* says—"Honouring with due worship Gods, Brahmins, religious preceptors and persons of great wisdom, purity, straightforwardness, celibacy, and abstention from the infliction of injury—these are said to constitute bodily *tapas*. The speech which is unirritating and true, and is at the same time agreeable and good, and also the recitation and study of the scriptures—these are said to form vocal *tapas*. Transparent kindliness of disposition, calm benignity, silence, self-restraint and purity of the heart—such things as these are spoken of as mental *tapas*". From this classified enumeration of the various forms of *tapas*, translated as 'austerity', we may make out fairly well what is intended to be conveyed by that word *tapas* as used in the *Gītā*, although its connotation in the Sanskrit language happens to be large and very varied. And the purposes, for which the effort of self-discipline implied in *tapas* may be put forth, are also equally varied, as pointed out in the same context in the *Gītā*. Nevertheless, we may gather thence that the best form of *tapas* is that, wherein the continued effort of self-discipline is put forth with a view to acquire that self-mastery, which is the inevitable pre-requisite of self-realisation and God-realisation. Consequently, we cannot be altogether wrong if we hold that *yajña* or worship is

representative of the best aspect of the life of *karma-yōga*, while *tapas* or austerity is representative of the best aspect of the life of *jñāna-yōga*. Accordingly, that God, who is the Great Lord of All the Worlds and the Friend of All Born Beings, is as much the God of the *karma-yōgin* as He is of the *jñāna-yōgin*, in as much as He happens to be the enjoyer of all worships and all austerities. When the *jñāna-yōgin* has such an all-comprehensive God-realisation, it is but natural for him to make himself, like his great God, a friend of all born beings. To know God as He is, is, as you know, to be impelled to become like unto God; and the *yōgin*, who becomes like unto God, attains the peace which passeth all understanding, the peace which is begotten of the supreme bliss of soul-salvation and God-attainment. Please let me draw your attention here to the fact that the twelfth stanza in this chapter, which happens to be the last of those that therein deal with *karma-yōga*, mentions the attainment of an enduring and everlasting peace as the final fulfilment of the aim of that *yōga*; and in this concluding stanza of the chapter, the attainment of a similar peace is declared to be the goal of *jñāna-yōga* also. It is thus made evident to us, that the life of unselfish duty, duly done, leads to the same goal, as the life that aims at securing the wisdom which results from self-realisation and God-realisation. Therefore, the true answer to the question, with which this fifth chapter begins, is that, of the two paths of work and renunciation, the one is quite as good as the other for the attainment of the final good, provided that the person who chooses either of them is by his natural qualifications fully fit for its appropriate adoption. And now let us close our work here for to-day; we shall commence the study of the sixth chapter in our next class.

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CHAPTER VI.

To-day we have to begin the study of the sixth chapter. Before doing so, it is desirable to have a connected idea of the teachings contained in the fifth chapter, so that we may understand the exact relation of that chapter to the chapter which immediately follows it. The fifth chapter, as you know, begins with the request of Arjuna to Śrī-Krishṇa to make it clear to him which is decidedly the better path of conduct, the path of *karma-yōga* or the path of *karma-sannyāsa;* and you know also that, in response to this request, Arjuna was told that both the paths are equally good in so far as the attainment of the supreme good of soul-salvation is concerned, for the reason that each of them is equally well calculated to bring about that attainment. However, we have to bear in mind that the path of *karma-sannyāsa*, which requires the renunciation of worldly life and the adoption of the life of complete self-control and meditation and mental concentration with a view to secure self-realisation and God-realisation, cannot be safely resorted to by all. Only those, who are, by their natural qualifications, fit for adopting this path of renunciation, may do so without breaking down badly in the hard endeavour; and such as have this fitness are indeed very few. But the other path—the path of *karma-yōga*, which requires all persons to do their appropriate duties in life without any attachment whatsoever to the fruits of work,—demands no such special qualifications from those who endeavour to adopt it for guiding their lives aright. It is fully helpful to them in enabling them to obtain that purity of soul or freedom from the stain of *karma*, which is held to be a necessary pre-requisite for winning God-attainment and the consequent enjoyment of the supreme peace that is divine and everlasting. In fact, *karma-yōga* is a morally strengthening process of self-discipline suitable for all; its aim is to make life, as it is under normal and natural conditions, a course of such discipline for all. In it, life itself is used as an effective means for getting rid of life's selfishness, and aspirants are trained step by step to become unworldly, even when they live the life that is to all appearance worldly. To make life put on an uncommon and extraordinary

aspect by forcing its psychology to assume a supra-normal condition, so that thereby reality may be experienced as it is and righteousness may be made to prevail spontaneously, appears to me to be undeniably a noble effort, in view of the fact that its aim is so high and its achieved results in history have been so full of untold blessings to humanity. But only strong spiritual heroes are equal to this effort; they alone can turn away from the world and live successfully the life of ascetic renunciation, concentrating all their endeavour and attention on the accomplishment of soul-salvation through self-realisation and God-realisation. This harder path of *karma-sannyāsa*, which is indeed the same as the path of *jñāna-yōga*, is thus fit for the chosen few; and they have their salvation always in their own hands, and are by their wisdom and example of love and service able to help on immensely the salvation of mankind. Therefore, it is no wonder that Śrī-Kṛishṇa praised equally well both these paths—the path of unselfish work and achievement and also the path of renunciation and realisation. Only, Arjuna did not know that he was not such a spiritual hero as might appropriately and with true advantage follow the path of renunciation and realisation. He mistook his own capacity and fitness, and could not understand at the same time that the worthiness of a path of life is not determined by itself altogether, but is intimately related to its suitability for adoption by those for whom it is intended. I am sure you will all agree with me, when I say that the spiritual sublimity of the path of renunciation and self-realisation is strikingly supreme; and its fascination for the Asiatic mind at any rate is marvellously mighty. Therefore, we are all apt to think that the ascetic path of renunciation and realisation is positively and of itself the better of the two paths. Nevertheless, in so judging it, we invariably ignore an important factor, which is necessarily involved in the determination of their relative superiority; and that factor is, as I have already told you, the suitability of the person, who wishes to adopt either of the two paths, for his doing so with true benefit to himself and advantage to the society of which he is a member. Therefore, in the case of some, the path of work and achievement is certain to prove to be the better, while, in the case of others, the path of renunciation and realisation is apt to turn out to be the better. Thus both the paths are good, each being good in its own place.

Both the paths are good, also for the reason that both of them give rise to the same moral result and lead to the same final goal. The chief moral result, which the adoption of either of these two paths gives rise to, is the great lesson of *samatva* or the equality of all beings, which it impresses on the minds of all those who earnestly endeavour to adopt it as their path of life. In so far as the person, who adopts in life the path of ascetic renunciation and realisation, is concerned, his success in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration makes him alight naturally on self-realisation, by which he comes to know that all souls are as real as his own and are essentially alike. Such a knowledge, so acquired, of the similarity of all souls in their essential nature, compels him as a matter of course to arrive at the conclusion that, between one person and another, there cannot be anything like a real difference, so long as the soul happens to be the basic reality of beings and the soul of any one being is essentially similar to the soul of any other being. His sense of the equality of all beings is thus a direct inevitable result of his own personal experience of the essential similarity of all souls. Unless he contradicts his own spiritual vision of the inner truth of things, he cannot discard the lesson of *samatva* as forming his most appropriate guide of life. And the earnest *karma-yōgin*, who adopts the active life of work and achievement, as the best means for the attainment of salvation, has, as you know, to free himself completely from all attachment to the fruits of work, if he is to succeed in making the means he adopts subserve the end which he wishes to attain. In other words, he has to get rid of the feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*, that is, of *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*, altogether, if his life is to lead him on assuredly to the goal of God-attainment. He, who gets rid of his own *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra* thus, sees naturally that the *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra* of others are as inappropriate and unjustifiable as his own. When, in this manner, the *i-ness* and *mine-ness* of all beings are driven away from within the horizon of his mental vision entirely, then the sense of *samatva* naturally asserts itself in the sphere of his thought as well as of action. If this sense of the equality of all beings is the result of the absolute annihilation of the feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness*, and if, without such annihilation of these feelings, the life of work and achievement can not be made to serve as a means for the attainment of the salvation

that happens to be the supreme and ultimate good of life, then there can be no difficulty whatsoever in making out how the practice of the rule of *samatva* is well able to guard the *karma-yōgin* from all dangerous pitfalls and guide him aright to the true goal of life. The sincere and earnest practice of the rule of *samatva* in life is impossible to the selfish man. Since selfishness happens to be the great obstacle to salvation, the aspirant may easily remove that obstacle in the way of his soul by observing in life the rule of *samatva* in relation to all beings. In the language of the *Gītā* itself, the *karma-yōgin* has to be *sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā* (V. 7.); that is, the aspirant, who seeks to attain salvation through the life of work and achievement, has to be so completely unselfish as to be able to look upon his own soul as forming actually the soul of all beings. Similarly, the *Gītā* describes the *karma-sannyāsin*, who adopts the life of renunciation and realisation, as one who is naturally *sarva-bhūta-hitē ratah*—devoted to accomplish the good of all beings. Moreover, we are told that this same *karma-sannyāsin*, who is, as you know, none other than the *jñāna-yōgin*, is, owing to the fullness of his spiritual wisdom, able to see God as the Friend of All Born Beings (V. 29.). Since godliness is in fact god-like-ness, the godly *jñāna-yōgin* has also to be the friend of all born beings. Thus we make out that the appreciation of the great value of the rule of universal *samatva*, as a guide in life, is indeed a noteworthy moral result, which it is fully possible to derive as well from the adoption of the path of *karma-sannyāsa* as of *karma-yōga*. Further, the final attainment resulting from the life of *karma-yōga* is declared to be enduring and everlasting spiritual peace (V. 12.). This means, as you can see that the unselfishness of the *karma-yōgin*, acquired by him by means of the persistent practice of the rule of *samatva*, enables him to become free from the bondage of *karma*, and thus absolves him from the sad necessity of having to be born again and again so as to die again and again; the sin and the suffering of *samsāra* no longer touch him, and he becomes godlike in point of the possession of the purity, which cannot at all be sullied, and of the peace, which is absolutely imperturbable and passeth all understanding. So also is the *jñāna-yōgin*, who, after obtaining self-realisation, is led on to the attainment of God-realisation, understood to win in the end the divine peace which passeth all understanding (V. 29.). If you grant that it is a natural consequence of God-realisation to make

those that are blessed with it acquire god-like-ness, and if you at the same time see that supreme and unlimited *ānanda*, which is indeed heavenly bliss, is an essential element of god-like-ness, then you can not help coming to the conclusion that the successful *jñāna-yōgin* is certain to become the happy possessor of such heavenly bliss. Need I tell you that to become so blessed with heavenly bliss is in fact the same thing as coming into possession of that serene and everlasting peace which is altogether divine? To win this everlasting divine peace through God-realisation and God-attainment is in this way the goal of *karma-yōga* as well as of *jñāna-yōga*. Accordingly, to the question—which of them is the better—the most appropriate answer is that both are equally good, each being good in its own place.

This same idea of the proved equality of these two paths is viewed from another stand-point at the beginning of the sixth chapter, wherein the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, as a means for the attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation, is dealt with in greater detail than in the fifth chapter. We all know that, when Arjuna's sympathies and sense of humanity were severely tried by the heart-appalling crisis of the impending great war, he felt a preference for the path of *karma-sannyāsa*. To him the path of *karma-sannyāsa* appeared to be pre-eminently the path of *yōga* specially well fitted to enable one to reach directly the goal of soul-salvation, while the path of *karma-yōga* appeared to be simply the way which led to *bhōga* or the enjoyment of worldly power and pleasure. That he was wrong in holding that the path of *karma-yōga* aimed at securing the enjoyment of worldly power and pleasure, was, as we all know, made clear to him in more ways than one by Śrī-Krishṇa. The aim of the path of work also is quite as much to kill selfishness as the aim of the path of renunciation and realisation is; and if the path of work and the path of renunciation are both equally good, then he, who follows well the path of work, must be able thereby to acquire that same unerring moral guidance in life, which one obtains through the adoption of the path of renunciation. It is in fact this very thing to which our attention is drawn in the first stanza of the sixth chapter. Indeed, it is maintained here that the acquisition of the great moral power of unselfishness, through living the life of disinterested duty duly done, is a necessary preparation

for the adoption of the bolder life of renunciation and realisation even by those who possess the required natural fitness for its adoption. Although the main purpose of the sixth chapter of the *Gītā* is to explain the *yōga* of renunciation and realisation, we find it beginning, obviously for this very reason, with a consideration of the *yōga* of unselfish duty duly done. Accordingly this chapter commences thus:

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।
स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरग्निर्नचाक्रियः ॥ १ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID—

1. He, who, not depending upon the fruit of works, does the work that ought to be done, (he) is the *sannyāsin* as well as the *yōgin*, (but) not (he) who is devoid of the (sacrificial) fire, nor (he) who is actionless.

Ordinarily *sannyāsin* denotes in Sanskrit a person who has adopted the *sannyāsāśrama*, that is, a person who has entered into the fourth stage in the life of an Indian Ārya as ordered and regulated by the ancient religious law of the Hindus. I am sure you know that the *Smṛiti* law of India divides the life of an Indian Āryan man into four stages, the first being that of the *brahmachārin* or Vedic student, the second that of the *gṛihastha* or householder, the third that of the *vānaprastha* or forest-hermit, and the fourth that of the *sannyāsin* or mendicant ascetic. According to the regulations bearing upon these stages of life, as given in our sacred law, the Vedic student, the householder and the forest-hermit are all expected to maintain the sacred fire and offer oblations to it daily as a part of the religious worship to be conducted by them. But no such obligation to maintain the sacred fire rests on the mendicant ascetic, and he is therefore devoid of the sacrificial fire. This last stage of *sannyāsa* being the only stage in the life of the Indian Āryan man, which is wholly unassociated with the sacred fire, it is very natural to make such want of association with such fire the index, as it were, of that particular stage in life. Similarly, the ordinary meaning of *yōgin* in Sanskrit is to denote a person, who is engaged in meditation and mental concentration, so as to become completely self-absorbed and entirely oblivious of the

external world and all its influences. A person, who is so absorbed in meditation and is so unaffected by all external influences, is bound to be physically inactive in an extraordinary degree. Although it is true that every strikingly inactive person need not be a *yōgin* on that account, the extreme physical inactivity of the real *yōgin* in *samādhi* is a matter which can rarely escape attention; and it is no wonder that common people consider such extreme physical inactivity to be invariably the index of a person who is a *yōgin*. It has thus come about that to be unassociated with the sacrificial fire is as much the sign of the *sannyāsin* as extreme physical inactivity is the sign of the *yōgin*. The *sannyāsin*, as you know, has always been held in high honour in this country on account of his renunciation and unworldliness; and the *yōgin* holds here a still higher place of honour for the reason that, while possessing the renunciation and the unworldliness of the *sannyāsin*, he must have in addition acquired true wisdom and also rare powers of realisation. Therefore many spiritually ambitious persons, whose purpose in life has been to mount up to the pinnacle of perfection in the pursuit of righteousness and divine realization, have, among us, endeavoured with zeal to become earnest and successful *sannyāsins* and *yōgins*. Arjuna himself wanted, as you know, to become a *sannyāsin*, and was ready to turn his back upon the battle-field. To him and to all like him, the lesson conveyed in this stanza is, that for one to do one's duty without attachment to the fruits of work is to be no less than a true *sannyāsin* and a true *yōgin* at once. We may say that even more is meant here; we are in fact taught here that the disinterested doer of duty is a very much better *sannyāsin* than he, who is merely marked by firelessness, and a very much better *yōgin* than he, who is marked by extraordinary actionlessness. This means, in other words, that the disinterested performance of duty is in itself capable of yielding to the aspirant the moral as well as the spiritual results of both *sannyāsa* and *yōga*, and should not therefore be lightly discarded by any one who seeks soul-salvation and God-attainment.

There is another interpretation given of this stanza, which is also worthy of being taken into consideration. According to this interpretation, the word *sannyāsin* is understood to mean *karmasannyāsin* and the word *yōgin* to mean *karma-yōgin*: and the effect of so understanding these words is obviously to make the stanza declare

that the disinterested doer of duty is both a renouncer of works and a performer of works at the same time. You may well ask how this can be, in as much as the statement, that one and the same person happens at the same time to be a renouncer of works and also a performer of works, is a distinct contradiction in terms. But we know, from what we have learnt already, what meaning we have to give to this statement. It must not be interpreted too literally. On the other hand, we have to understand here, by the expression 'renouncer of works', not the person who has given up the doing of works altogether and is absolutely passive and actionless, but the person, who, though engaged in the doing of work vigorously, has renounced completely all attachment to the fruits of work. His being engaged in the doing of duty makes him necessarily a performer of works; and it is held that, by renouncing the attachment to the fruits of his work, he becomes a renouncer of works. Since the performance of work and the renouncing of the attachment to the fruits of work may well co-exist in the same person at the same time, there can surely be no contradiction in terms in the statement that the disinterested doer of duty is at the same time both a performer of works and a renouncer of works. Accordingly, we may interpret the stanza so as to make it mean that the true *sannyāsin* is not he, who is characterised by non-association with the sacred fire, but is evidently he, who, while performing duly all his duties in life, renounces fully and freely all the fruits of his work, and that, similarly, the true *yōgin* is not he, who is characterised by extraordinary passivity and actionlessness, but is he, who, being vigorously active, disinterestedly performs all his duties well in life. You may remember how, in a stanza in the fifth chapter (V. 11.) the word *yōgin* is used distinctly in the sense of the *karma-yōgin*, who, with a view to secure the purity of his soul, performs his duties in life without any attachment whatsoever to the fruits of work: and the purity of the soul he so secures is, as you know well, quite able to lead him on to the goal of God-attainment. Seeing that Arjuna was called upon to acquire that wisdom, which would enable him to see 'work' in 'no-work' and 'no-work' in 'work,' this interpretation of this stanza is not without importance. As a matter of fact the very next stanza is intended to tell us that in the 'work' of the typical *karma-yōgin* there is always 'no-work.' And now let us pass on to it.

यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव ।
न ह्यसंन्यस्तसंकल्पो योगी भवति कश्चन ॥ २ ॥

2. O Arjuna, understand that to be *yōga*, which they declare to be *sannyāsa;* for, no one becomes a *yōgin*, who has not renounced (his) desires.

Here again the question arises as to whether we have to understand by *sannyāsa* the mendicant ascetic's life of renunciation representing the fourth stage in the legally ordered life of the 'twice-born' Hindu, or the path of life known as *karma-sannyāsa*, wherein the actual renouncing of worldly works as far as possible is the chief thing to be observed. Similarly, in relation to the word *yōga* also, we have to choose between two meanings, these being the practising of meditation and mental concentration with a view to attain self-realisation and God-realisation and the performing of all the duties in life duly and disinterestedly. If *yōga* means the latter of these things, it becomes, as you know, quite equivalent to *karma-yōga*. Understanding the word *sannyāsa* to mean the mendicant ascetic's unworldly life of renunciation, and the word *yōga* to mean the life of meditation and mental concentration aiming at self-realisation and God-realisation, we may interpret this stanza to mean that the mendicant ascetic's unworldly life and the *yōgin's* life of the practice of meditation and mental concentration are in fact so intimately related to each other as to deserve to be spoken of as being really one and the same. This would of course imply that every true *sannyāsin* is bound to become a *yōgin*, and that every *yōgin* has necessarily to be a true *sannyāsin*. Indeed in the ceremony of adopting the life-condition of the *sannyāsin*, there is a formal declaration intimating the renouncement of all desires by the novice seeking to become a mendicant monk; and according to Patañjali *vairāgya*, that is, the dispassion due to the renouncement of desires, is one of the essential means to be adopted by the aspirant, whose object is to arrive at self-realisation and God-realisation through meditation and mental concentration. You may thus see that this interpretation is not without authoritative support. But the context really requires that, as in the previous stanza, we should here also understand *karma-sannyāsa* to be the meaning of *sannyāsa*, and *karma-yōga* to be the meaning of *yōga*. Etymologically

sannyāsa may signify renunciation, even as *yōga* may signify application. Hence *karma-sannyāsa* is interpreted as renouncement of work. Anything like total renouncement of work being, however, impossible of accomplishment by any one, *sannyāsa*, when understood to be equivalent to *karma-sannyāsa*, can be made to mean only the giving up of the fruits of work. If, in this way, what they call *sannyāsa* comes to denote, not the giving up of work itself, but the giving up of the fruits of work, then it is perfectly right to understand that very same thing to be *karma-yōga* or merely *yōga* as it is spoken of here; for the active *yōgin* also has to perform work and at the same time renounce the desire for the fruits of work. Equating *sannyāsa* and *yōga* in this manner amounts to the same thing as calling upon us to see 'work' in 'no-work' and 'no-work' in 'work'. It, moreover, must have enabled Arjuna, who, instead of doing his duty in the battle-field, wanted to get away from there and adopt the life of the mendicant *sannyāsin*, to see that all the merit of true *sannāysa* is really to be found in the life of disinterested work duly performed. In the very next stanza we are told of another reason, why the life of work has to be accepted as one of great importance and usefulness; and that reason is that the life of work is invariably seen to provide the necessary preparation for the adoption of the life of meditation and mental concentration. This amounts in fact to Arjuna having been told that, even if he was really in earnest in wishing to adopt the life of the mendicant ascetic with the object of attaining self-realisation and God-realisation through the practice of meditation and mental concentration, he surely could not, consistently with such intention, run away from the battlefield, leaving all his duties and responsibiiities there as a warrior to remain unfulfilled. The life of duty has to be lived aright even by those, whose ultimate aim is the life of meditation and realisation, because it is found that this latter form of life cannot be lived to any good purpose, unless, at least as a preparatory step, the former kind of life has been lived well and truly without the smallest taint of selfishness. We are accordingly told—

आरुरुक्षोर्मुनेर्योगं कर्म कारणमुच्यते ।
योगारूढस्य तस्यैव शमः कारणमुच्यते ॥ ३ ॥

3. In the case of him, who is desirous of climbing up to *yōga*, work is said to be the means; and in the case of that same (person), after he has climbed up to *yōga*, tranquillity is said to be the means.

It is obvious that we cannot be right, if we interpret the word *yōga* in this stanza to mean the same thing as *karma-yōga*. In *karma-yōga* work has to be an end in itself; in fact it has to be both the end and the means. But in relation to the *yōga* mentioned in this stanza, work is declared to be the means; and so what is to be attained with the aid of work as means has to be that *yōga*. Further, this same *yōga*, for attaining which work is declared to be the means, is evidently not looked upon here as an end in itself, inasmuch as we are told that, after one has climbed up to *yōga*, tranquillity—which is in fact the same as cessation from work—is the means for attaining that for which one takes the trouble of climbing up to *yōga*. In this context *kāraṇa* is rightly interpreted to mean *sādhana* or the means for the attainment of an end, and work has to signify all the various activities of all the three instruments of action, namely, mind, language and body—or *manō-vāk-kāya* as they put it in Sanskrit. Since we are told here that the end, to accomplish which one climbs up to *yōga*, has for its means tranquillity or cessation from work, the *yōga* so spoken of must clearly be the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration aiming at self-realisation as well as God-realisation. We know that the genuine aspirant, who practises the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, does so with the object of attaining self-realisation and God-realisation; and for the attainment of these realisations through meditation and mental concentration, tranquillity is an inevitable requisite. Indeed, without tranquillity, it is absolutely impossible to practise meditation and mental concentration; the distraction, which is naturally implied by the absence of tranquillity, is utterly fatal to mental concentration of any kind. It is, therefore, evident how, to him, who has climbed up to *yōga*, tranquillity is the means for the attainment of the still higher object which he has in view. And let us now try to see how, in the case of the aspirant, who wishes to climb up to *yōga*, work is the means for the attainment of his immediate object. It is indeed quite plain that his immediate object in

view is to climb up to *yōga.* It is already known to us that none can succeed well in climbing up to the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration without previously acquiring true and genuine *vairāgya ;* because the qualities of non-attachment, dispassion and disinterestedness, which are all implied in it, are inevitably required to make it at all possible to put forth the needed effort of meditation and mental concentration. Non-attachment to 'external contacts', freedom from desire and aversion, and the possession of absolute unselfishness are, as we know, among the essential pre-requisites for the practice of this *yōga ;* and none can succeed in securing these pre-requisites without the aid of action and achievement and the habitual renunciation of all the fruits of works. The *vairāgya*, which is caused by a sudden shock of grief or disgust, is apt to be shortlived and infirm; and the *vairāgya*, which is a mere virtue of necessity, is no *vairāgya* at all. If, however, the feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* are got rid of by one through continued voluntary effort, so that their absence becomes one's second nature, the *vairāgya* hence resulting is bouud to be both real and lasting; and it may well enable one to climb up to the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. Therefore, the discipline of unselfish work,—or, if you prefer it, of disinterested duty duly done,—is a necessary means to enable one to undertake the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. Thus the *yōga*, for climbing up to which work forms the means, is no other than this *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. Accordingly, there is this further merit about the life of *karma-yōga*, namely, that it serves as a necessary stepping stone for the life of *karma-sannyāsa.* In other words, the life of work is a necessary preparation for that life of tranquillity, which enables the aspirant to attain self-realisation and God-realisation, and should not therefore be abandoned lightheartedly under the impulse of the transient shocks of painful or disagreeable feelings. After thus pointing out to Arjuna the great undesirability of thoughtlessly renouncing and running away from duty, even though it be under the belief that in such renunciation is to be found a better means of salvation than in the trying life of dutiful work and achievement, the next thing that had to be done was very naturally to give him an idea of the peculiar difficulty of the life of *karma-sannyāsa*, so as to enable him to see for himself how unfit he was to live that life. Accordingly, the next stanza gives a description

of some of the notable characteristics of the person, who has climbed up to *yōga* so as to become a fairly fit aspirant. It runs thus :—

यदा हि नेन्द्रियार्थेषु न कर्मस्वनुषज्जते ।
सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते ॥ ४ ॥

4. When one has in fact no lingering attachment to the objects of the senses and to activities, and has renounced all desires, then one is said to be a person that has climbed up to *yōga*.

To understand correctly the meaning of the word *anushajjate* in this stanza, it is desirable that we take into consideration the difference in meaning between *saṅga* and *anushaṅga*. The word *anushaṅga* may mean that which closely follows or goes in the wake of attachment. If we think of an attachment having been torn away, then whatever in the form of attachment might linger behind, even after this tearing away has taken place,—that is called *anushaṅga*. Consequently the expression *na anushajjate* has been translated here as 'has no lingering attachment'. It is evidently in recognition of the existence of such lingering attachment and of its ability to vitiate the value of hastily assumed and inadequately tested renunciation, that Buddha allowed his *bhikshu* monks to revert to domestic life, if they felt that they had not acquired sufficient mental and moral strength to overcome effectively the temptations of pleasure and of power. All of us ought to know, from our own experience, how apt we are even ordinarily to mistake the actual strength of our own heart and will; and when, owing to any special combination of causes, we become subject to overpowering passions and emotions, our judgment of our own mental and moral strength is then certain to be highly partial and incorrect. If, as required here, we understand that the person, who has climbed up to *yōga*, is he, who has, through the carefully controlled discipline of his daily life, acquired the fitness to live that life of tranquillity, which, by means of meditation and mental concentration, enables him to arrive at self-realisation and God-realisation, then there can be no doubt that, in his heart, there ought to be no lingering attachment to the objects of the senses and to the activities that are impelled by motives relating to those objects.

Indeed, he has to be wholly free from all sense-impelled desires and activities, as, otherwise, he cannot become fit for the successful practice of meditation and mental concentration. In this connection let me mention to you once again the nature of the psychological connection which exists in relation to the objects of the senses and the activities and the desires of men. The objects of the senses, when perceived, give rise to the sensation of pleasure or pain as the case may be; and these sensations of pleasure and pain determine desire, which is invariably seen to be an internal impulse directed towards the seeking of pleasure and the avoidance of pain. And men act under the influence of desire, that is, their activities are impelled by their internal impulse to obtain pleasure and to get rid of pain. Accordingly, it is evident that he, who has been able to renounce all desires, cannot have any lingering attachment to the objects of the senses; for the existence of such a lingering attachment even to the smallest extent in him implies the existence of desire as its very natural consequence. The common relation, between desire on the one hand and attachment to the objects of the senses on the other hand, is so intimate that it may even be maintained that such attachment is more the consequence of desire than it happens to be its cause. We need not now discuss which of these two positions is the correct one to hold; and I believe we may, without doing any violence to truth, adopt the view that attachment to the objects of the senses is invariably the cause of desire. Just as lingering attachment to the objects of the senses gives rise to desire, even so lingering attachment to activities may also give rise to desire. While it is strictly true that desire forms, as it were, the very essence of man's motive to action, we cannot forget the fact that habitual and agreeable activities have a natural tendency to evoke the desire for their free and enjoyable continuance. This may be due to agreeable activity being of itself enjoyable under favourable circumstances. That activity is capable of giving rise to pleasure and delight cannot surely be unknown to your own experience. Hence, lingering attachment to activities also may give rise to desire. Whether it does or does not give rise to desire, it is in itself quite capable of acting as a source of harmful distraction to the aspirant, whose aim is to arrive at self-realisation and God-realisation through the tranquil life of meditation and mental concentration. In the way of the fulfilment of the objects

aimed at by such an aspirant, lingering attachment to activities is as undesirable an obstacle as lingering attachment to the objects of the senses; and unless both these are completely got rid of, he cannot be free from all desires, so as to be perfectly fitted for the tranquil life of meditation and mental concentration. How one may obtain this fitness is the point taken into consideration in the next stanza which is as follows:—

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।
आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मनः ॥ ५ ॥

5. One should uplift one's self through one's self, (but) should not cause one's self to sink down into ruin; for, one is indeed one's own friend, (and) one is indeed one's own enemy.

This stanza has a general application to human life, as you may easily see; for it may be understood to denote the well-known truth that every man is the architect of his own fortune. It may also be interpreted as having a special relation to the Hindu doctrine of *karma*, which forms an essential part of the *Vēdānta* philosophy and religion; and we may thus gather from it the idea that, according to the helpful or harmful character of his *karma*, every man makes or mars the salvation of his own soul. In this context, however, it cannot be interpreted in either of these two ways. The question under consideration here is how one may acquire the fitness to 'climb up to *yōga*' and to live thereafter the serenely tranquil life of meditation and mental concentration with a view to attain self-realisation and God-realisation. In so far as the attainment of the salvation of the soul is concerned, none of us can say, without the fear of having to miss that very salvation,—'I have thrown the responsibility of securing for me my salvation upon the shoulders of my *guru*; and he will bear the burden of that responsibility well enough for me; I need not therefore take any particular care of my conduct in life, but may go on living my life in any manner that is most convenient and agreeable to me'. Nor can any one of us say, without having to undergo the same risk,—'I have my God who is responsible to bestow upon me my salvation: and He will surely

bestow it upon me, whatever may be the kind of life I choose to live'. By saying this, I do not of course mean to declare that reliance upon the wisdom and the guidance of the *guru*, as well as upon the grace of God, is of no use whatever in enabling a man to obtain the salvation of his soul. What I really mean to convey to you is that, over and above these things, the aspirant stands in need of much self-control and self-discipline in order that he may succeed in the endeavour to secure the salvation of his soul. In fact the wisdom and the guidance of the *guru* are expected to be helpful to the aspirant in enabling him to obtain in the appropriate manner the required power of self-control and self-discipline; and it may be easily made out from the history of many Hindu saints and sages that the grace of God is as often seen to come to some as the due reward of their true humility and righteousness in life, as it is observed in the case of others to be a sweet and unfailing influence tending to convert and purify their hearts and thus make their lives full of humility and righteousness. Since this power of self-control and self-discipline is really at the basis of humility and righteousness in life, we cannot find it hard to see how every man makes or mars his own salvation. Exactly like this is the case of the aspirant who wishes to 'climb up to *yōga*.' There is no denying that he stands in need of the wise guidance of the *guru*, and that he equally requires to be blessed well with the grace of God. Nevertheless, he cannot become absolutely free from all desires and from attachment to the objects of the senses and to activities, except through the chastening discipline of the life of unselfish work, that is, of the life of disinterested duty duly done. The art of living aright the unworldly life of unselfish activity has generally to be learnt in an atmosphere of worldliness, because the power to withstand the attractive forces and tempting allurements of the life of worldliness can come only through the continued practice of conscious resistance in relation to them. And so long as the practice of such resistance on the part of one man does not put into another man the power to live aright the life of unworldliness—the life which is altogether free from all selfish desires and attachments—so long, it is perfectly right to declare that, in the matter of climbing up to *yōga*, every man has to uplift himself through himself. Men may throw themselves into water either so as to get drowned therein, or with the object of

learning how to swim so that they may thereby become able to guard themselves for ever afterwards from the danger of getting drowned. In the same manner men may throw themselves into the life of worldliness, so as to become hopelessly drowned therein; or they may acquire thereby the power to live well the life of unselfishness and non-attachment, so as to be in the world but not to be of the world. One may uplift one's self thus by one's own life in the world or cause one's self to sink down into ruin and lose all chances of speedy salvation. Accordingly, there can be no doubt that, in so far as acquiring, through the discipline of the life of unselfish work, the fitness for living the tranquil life of meditation and mental concentration is concerned, one is well able to be one's own friend or one's own enemy as the case may be. The conditions, which determine whether one will prove one's own friend or one's own enemy in the matter of fitting one's self for the peaceful life of meditation and realisation, are given in the next stanza.

बन्धुरात्मात्मनस्तस्य येनात्मैवात्मना जितः ।
अनात्मनस्तु शत्रुत्वे वर्तेतात्मैव शत्रुवत् ॥ ६ ॥

6. He, who has conquered himself, (he) is himself his own friend; but, in the case of him, who has not conquered himself, he himself is apt to be in enmity (in relation to himself) like a (real) enemy.

Clearly we are told here that, without what we may call self-conquest, it is not at all possible for any man to become a friend of himself so as to save himself by means of himself. Indeed a friend's character as friend is generally understood to be determined by his ready and willing helpfulness to him whose friend he is. I have already pointed out to you how man's life in the world and all the opportunities of achievement it affords may be utilised by him, so as gradually to acquire the power of self-conquest; and to the extent, to which he acquires this power, he becomes helpful to himself in the matter of the appropriate guidance of conduct and the attainment of the soul's salvation. The attainment of the salvation of the soul by means of right conduct is the highest aim of human life; and I am confident that none of you, who have entered into the spirit of

the *Gītā*, will be inclined to contradict this view. Therefore, if any man happens to be helpful to himself in the matter of the attainment of this highest aim, then there can be no doubt that he has thereby proved his title to be his own friend. In fact what is intended to be pointed out here is, that the acquisition of complete self-mastery enables a man to obtain his own salvation, while the absence of such self-mastery makes it utterly impossible for him to seek and obtain that salvation. That kind of self-mastery, which unfailingly enables a man to guide and control his conduct in life, so as to make it serve as the surest means for the attainment of the *summum bonum* of life, is indeed the best index of his self-conquest; for, he who has not conquered himself can never command that sort of self-mastery. The life of the person, who is without real self-mastery, is certain to drift aimlessly in all directions in obedience to the shifting impulses of fleeting fancies and exciting emotions. This makes all the energy of his life become completely wasted: what is worse still is, that he thereby loses entirely the very consciousness of his own intrinsic power to keep himself erect and aright, and is reduced to the condition of one who is an irretrievable slave of fanciful desires and passionate emotions. It is in this way that he becomes an enemy to himself. When any person becomes, for some reason or other, an enemy to himself, we are apt to think that the enmity directed against himself by himself cannot prove to be seriously harmful, as our experience tells us that very generally in human nature self-love preponderates over self-hatred. But in this case of the *yōgic* aspirant, who has not conquered himself, we are told that his own enmity against himself operates quite as injuriously as the enmity of another person who happens to be a real enemy to him. The fact is that, when, owing to the absence of the power of self-mastery, a man becomes an enemy to himself, he is altogether unaware that he is himself an enemy to himself, and his natural self-love is thus led to be off its guard and is even induced to enter—quite unconsciously of course—into an unholy alliance with the co-existent enemy. And the ruin encompassed by such an enemy, so helped, being nothing short of the frustration of the fulfilment of the divine destiny of the soul, we may without any hesitation declare that the worst form of enmity is that whereby one is led to become one's own

enemy. The next stanza tells us how we may discern the man, who has achieved self-conquest, and distinguish him from others, who have not conquered themselves. It runs thus:—

जितात्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहितः ।
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानावमानयोः ॥ ७ ॥

7. In the case of him, who has conquered himself and is highly peaceful, (his) soul is exceedingly well collected in (conditions of) heat and cold, (of) pleasure and pain, and similarly (of) honour and dishonour.

Before explaining what the characteristics of the man of accomplished self-conquest are, as given in this stanza, let me point out to you that the expression *paramātmā* found herein has been interpreted to mean the Supreme Soul, which is indeed a very possible interpretation. When it means the Supreme Soul, it happens to be a compound word made up of *parama* and *ātman.* The expression has also been interpreted to mean the individual soul, which is not the ordinary sense of the term, although it has to be said that in the context here it is the collectedness of the individual soul which is obviously intended to be described. Moreover, this expression *paramātmā* is capable of being split up according to the rules of Sanskrit grammar into two independent words, namely, *param* and *ātmā.* When so split up, *param* happens to be an adverb meaning 'exceedingly well' and *ātmā* of course means the individual soul. You must have already made out that it is this last interpretation of the expression *paramātmā*, which I have adopted in the translation of the stanza. Now please notice that the first thing, which is postulated here as an attribute of the man of accomplished self-conquest, is supreme peacefulness; and the next thing so postulated is the exceedingly good collectedness of his soul, whereby it becomes impossible for him to be distracted in any manner by any disturbing causes,—by such causes, for instance, as heat or cold, pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour. I believe you are all very well able to see easily that the supreme peacefulness of such a man is the immediate result of the excellent collectedness of his soul; and this collectedness comes to him as the result of his self-mastery and sustained

equanimity, which make it easy for him to rise above the tempting influence of the 'pairs of opposites'. To welcome calmly and with unflinching equanimity heat and cold, pleasure and pain, honour and dishonour, each of them as it comes, is not easily possible for the majority of mankind. You know that it is these 'pairs of opposites', which give rise to desire and aversion in almost all people, and that both desire and aversion are ordinarily seen to hold the will of man in complete subjection. We have already seen how the will is the most potent and the most immediate instrument of the soul, so that the subjection of the will to desires and aversions produced by the 'pairs of opposites,' amounts to the subjection and slavery of the soul itself. Our self-mastery and self-collectedness depend therefore upon our success in making the power of our will unyielding and adamantine; and when the will is truly unyielding and adamantine and is utilised for the attainment of the spiritual end of soul-salvation, it is no wonder that it gives rise to such a serene peacefulness in the heart as can never be disturbed by any distraction. Accordingly, the self-conquest of the aspirant really consists in his making his will unyielding and adamantine and in consciously directing all its power to attain the supreme spiritual end of soul-salvation.

ज्ञानविज्ञानतृप्तात्मा कूटस्थो विजितेन्द्रियः ।
युक्त इत्युच्यते योगी समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ॥ ८ ॥

8. (That) *yōgin*, whose nature is (pleased and) satisfied with knowledge and realisation, who is immoveably aloft and has conquered the senses, and to whom a clod of earth, a stone and gold are (all) alike (in value),—he is said to be (truly) the man of *yōga*.

We have already had a description of the man who has 'climbed up to *yōga*'. Here in this stanza we are told how we may make out whether the man, who has 'climbed up to *yōga*', has actually progressed far enough to become a true man of *yōga*. You know that the *yōgārūḍha* or the man that has 'climbed up to *yōga*' has been credited with two negative qualifications, namely, the qualification of being free from all lingering attachment to the objects of the senses as well as to activities and also the qualification of having

renounced all desires. Thus the utter non-existence of attachments and desires forms the distinguishing characteristic of the *yōgārūḍha*. But the *yukta* or the real man of *yōga* must have, as we are told here, certain positive qualifications in addition to these negative ones needed to enable an aspirant to 'climb up to *yōga*.' Of the four qualifications of the *yukta* specified in this stanza, sense-conquest and the capacity to consider a clod of earth and a stone and gold to be alike in value are very much the same as freedom from attachment to the objects of the senses and freedom from all desires. Indeed, there can be no sense-conquest in a person, so long as there is in him any lingering attachment to the objects of the senses. Similarly, it is only the man, who has renounced all desires, that can sincerely look upon a clod of earth, upon a stone and upon gold as things of equal worth, that is, as things which are all equally of no value to him. The two other requisite qualifications, which are positive and which also the true man of *yōga* should possess, are that he must be prone to be readily pleased and delighted with knowledge and spiritual realisation, and that he must be in spirit immoveably aloft, so as to remain entirely undisturbed by the innumerable cross-currents of the roaring torrents of wordly life and all its alluring attractions. The capacity to take delight in the grosser pleasures of the senses and in the satisfaction of the appetites comes of itself to all human beings as an outcome of the animal part of their nature. But the power to take delight in knowledge and in realisation rarely comes to them in such a spontaneous manner. In fact, the spontaneously derived power to take delight in the grosser pleasures of the senses and in the satisfaction of the appetites tends to suppress the free play of the power to take delight in knowledge and in realisation, in as much as the heavy burden of the flesh is invariably seen to prevent the activity of the spirit in almost all ordinary human beings. Therefore, the power to take delight in knowledge and in spiritual realisation can come to them only as the result of long and laborious self-culture, aiming at the steady weakening and ultimate exhaustion of the opposing power of the flesh. It is by killing the ape and tiger in man that the divine angel in him is allowed to come out and show himself. I am sure that you all know how it is possible, though not always easy, for man to learn to enjoy the luxury of knowing truth and

winning wisdom and doing good. Indeed no truly cultured man can ever rightly deny that there are intellectual and moral delights, which are infinitely more enjoyable and exhilarating than even the most delicious pleasures of the senses. In the aspirant, who, after having climbed up to *yōga*, has progressed far enough to become a man of *yōga*, the power to take delight in knowledge and in realisation is certain to make itself distinctly visible, because this very progress implies in his case a more effective subjugation of the flesh and a fuller enfranchisement of the spirit than was noticeable before. It must be clear that further progress along this line will naturally make him feel that the whole of his own reality consists in his being essentially a spirit—a soul, if you prefer that word. When, in addition to this apprehension of himself as a soul in reality, he comes to know, as he must, that all other beings are real only in so far as they are also souls, he becomes spiritually insulated, so to say, and is thus altogether uninfluenced by the tendencies and forces of the flesh, which throughout pervade the worldly life of selfish attachment and enjoyment. It is in this sense that he becomes a *kūṭastha* ; for it is only thus that he can rise to occupy his high place on the lofty mountain-peak of pure and perfected spirituality, from whence he may, in his calm serenity and inward illumination, defy for ever the mutability and mortality that are characteristic of matter in all its many and varied conditions. It must be borne in mind that the man of *yōga*, who has in this manner become a *kūṭastha* and is hence immoveably aloft, is not thereby absolved from the obligation of having to live and labour among those who toil and suffer below in the valleys ; in fact he has, to the extent of his power and opportunities, to endeavour always to lighten their burdens and disperse their darkness. The acquisition of the power to have one's delight entirely centred in knowledge and in realisation, and the possession of the capacity to ascend to the highest peaks of serene spiritual experience, and internal detachment and aloofness from all the tempting tendencies of the flesh mark, accordingly, the person, who truly deserves to be called a *yukta* or the man of accomplished *yōga*, as distinguished from the man, who is either desirous of climbing up to *yōga* or has actually climbed up to *yōga*. As in all matters of human achievement, here also we find that desire, endeavour and accomplishment represent the three natural stages

in the progressive advancement of the aspirant aiming at *yōgic* realisation; and as a matter of course every later stage implies a certain amount of accomplished success along the line in passing onwards from the realisation of the immediately preceding stage. That the final stage is indeed the best is emphasised, as we shall see, in the next stanza.

सुहृन्मित्रार्युदासीनमध्यस्थद्वेष्यबन्धुषु ।
साधुष्वपि च पापेषु समबुद्धिर्विशिष्यते ॥ ९ ॥

9. He, who is equally disposed towards good-hearted benefactors, friends, enemies, indifferent persons, impartial persons, hateworthy persons, relations, virtuous persons and wicked persons, (he) is specially excellent.

The last stanza gave us an idea of the person, whom we may look upon as the man of accomplished *yōga*. We have been told that he finds his pleasure and satisfaction in knowledge and realisation, that he is immoveably aloft on the high peak of exalted spirituality, that he has conquered his senses and looks upon a clod of earth, a stone and gold as though they were all of equal value or equally of no value to him. Among these characteristics of his, it is the last characteristic, which happens to be best suited to serve as an external index to point out the internal possession of true *yōgic* enlightenment and realisation by him. The undisturbed disposition of equal evaluation in relation to objects, which the world holds to be highly valuable or of little or no value, is in itself a very good proof of the effective eradication of selfishness from the heart of the true man of *yōga*. Still, in so far as conduct in life is concerned, even this entire absence of selfishness is evidently looked upon as a mere negative virtue, so that, if, as a *yōgin*, he is desirous of becoming specially excellent, he has to supplement this absence of selfishness with an equal and comprehensive manifestation of true love and sympathy towards all persons, who may come into relation with him in any manner whatsoever. It has to be borne in mind in this connection that indifference as to the value of material objects is generally capable of being more easily acquired than the power to be equally loving and sympathetic to all sorts of persons, who stand in all sorts of relation to us.

What it is to be equally disposed towards all kinds of persons will become clear to us in the course of our study of this chapter. The real meaning of this equality of disposition, as also of the statement—*samatvam yōga uchyatē*—that *yōga* is equality, comes out well from what we are told in a later stanza (VI 32) in this chapter. From this stanza we shall distinctly learn that the supreme *yōgin* is he, who looks upon the pleasures and pains of others as though they were his own, and shows in this respect no difference whatsoever between one person and another. To feel joy in the joys of others and to feel woe in the woes of others are therefore at the basis of this equal disposition or sense of equality ; for it is thus that the *yōgin* gives practical expression to his realisation that all embodied beings are really like unto himself and are also like unto one another in their essential nature. It thus becomes his special function to love them and to serve them ; he can indulge in nothing like hatred in relation to them. Consequently, it is impossible for him to make manifest in his own life the distinction of friends and foes or the distinction of relations and no-relations ; wicked persons have to form as much the objects of his love and the recipients of his service as virtuous persons. In fact the attitude and disposition of other persons in relation to him can have no modifying influence on his own attitude of spontaneous love and service in relation to them. This does not mean that the supreme *yōgin* is unware of the moral distinction between good and evil so as not to know that good is really good and evil really evil. On the other hand, it has to be distinctly understood that the appreciation of moral good and the abhorrence of moral evil constitute the very core of the *yōgin's* life of self-realisation leading to God-realisation. But to abhor moral evil is not necessarily to hate the sinner. It surely cannot be impossible to conceive that the *yōgin's* very abhorrence of the sin of the sinner may well evoke love and sympathy for the weak and fallen man from the *yōgin*, who is strong through self-knowledge and lives his luminous life according to the rule of the equality of all beings. To advise and to encourage the weak to become strong, the fallen to rise, and the sinner to sin no more, is as much the work of true and earnest love as the appreciation and admiration that are sincerely bestowed upon the goodness of the good. Thus the rule of equal love to all may imply appreciation and admiration in some cases, quite as much

as pity and sympathetic correction and guidance in other cases. What this rule disallows absolutely is hatred; even the sinner ought not to be hated for the sake of his sin, because it is the sin of the sinner that is hate-worthy, but not the man or the woman that sins. Let us not fail to bear this distinction clearly in our minds, whenever we think or speak about the *yōgin's* equality of disposition in relation to all beings; this equality is indeed nothing other than the equal manifestation of his love, howsoever varied the manner of its manifestation may be.

Having thus pointed out the high ethical purpose and philosophical value of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, Śrī-Kṛishṇa proceeds to describe in some of the following stanzas the processes relating to the practice of that *yōga*. Let us take them into consideration in our next class.

XXIX

In our last class we began, as you know, the study of the sixth chapter. It commences with an eulogistic description of the great moral value of *karma-yōga* or the life of dutiful and efficient work without attachment to the fruits thereof. Nevertheless, the chapter as a whole is intended to give an exposition of the nature as well as the result of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration aiming at self-realisation and God-realisation. This latter *yōga* has here the various names of *sannyāsa*, *karma-sannyāsa*, *dhyāna-yōga* and *jñāna-yōga* given to it. It is in fact the *yōga* which is fully elaborated in the *Yōga-sūtras* of Patañjali; and its value is here shown to consist in its capacity to lead to self-realisation and God-realisation, both of which give to the doctrine of equality as a rule of conduct its truth-born authoritativeness and justification. You know that we have been told that, without the successful practice of *karma-yōga* or the living of the life of disinterested duty, it is not possible to win the realisations resulting from *jñāna-yōga*. Similarly, it is not possible to justify and establish the ethical authoritativeness of *karma-yōga* without the aid of the realisations resulting from *jñāna-yōga*. Such being the interdependence of these two *yōgas*, the study of *jñāna-yōga* cannot but be of supreme importance in all investigations relating to the philosophy of conduct. In addition to this, *jñāna-yōga*

has its own intrinsic value as a unique revealer of truth. Let us therefore try to understand its nature and object as explained in this chapter of the *Gītā*. The stanza, with which we begin our work to-day, tells us how one should undertake the practice of this *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. It runs thus :—

योगी युञ्जीत सततमात्मानं रहसि स्थितः ।
एकाकी यतचित्तात्मा निराशीरपरिग्रहः ॥ १० ॥

10. The *yōgin*, staying in solitude and being all alone, should constantly apply himself to (the practice of) *yōga*, with his mind and self under control and with no desire and no (sense of) ownership.

This *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration is defined by Patañjali as *chitta-vṛitti-nirōdha*, that is, as the voluntary prevention of the outward functioning of the thinking principle of consciousness. I may say here that it is very necessary on our part to guard ourselves against the easy tendency to come to the conclusion that Patañjali is really the original founder of what is commonly called the *Yōga* system of philosophy in Indian Sanskrit literature. Indeed this *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, aiming at the attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation, is as old as some of the oldest *Upanishads*; and in the famous *Kaṭhōpanishad* (iv. 1.), for instance, we have a direct reference to it. It is said therein—"The Self-born One so made the senses that they might work from within outwards. Therefore man sees external objects and not the internal self. However, a certain heroic person, wishing to attain immortality, turned his eye inwards and saw the internal self". Our authoritative commentators on this passage are of opinion that it refers in outline to the processes making up the practice of the *yōga* of meditation leading to self-realisation and God-realisation. Therefore, Patañjali has to be looked upon as one of the latest and probably the most scientific expounder of this *yōga* of meditation and realisation; and we need not at all feel surprised if the *Gītā* turns out to be one of the probable sources, from which he might have drawn at least a part of his information regarding it.

A reference to a later (VI. 20) stanza in this chapter will show you how, in the *Gītā* also, *yōga* is understood to be *chitta-vṛitti-nirōdha* or the prevention of the outward play of the activities of the mind looked upon as the thinking principle of consciousness. I believe I need not remind you here that to prevent the activities of the thinking principle of consciousness from playing outwards cannot amount to the absolute annihilation of its functioning; on the other hand, it simply amounts to the withdrawal of the mind from its contact with the objective world, so that the mind may thereby be enabled to have itself for its own object. Patañjali says that this sort of prevention of the outward functioning of the activities of the thinking principle becomes possible through *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya*, that is, through continued practice and dispassionate non-attachment; and it is truly worthy of note that this stanza commands the aspirant to apply himself constantly to the practice of *yōga* after becoming free from all desires and from all sense of ownership. We are further told here that, while endeavouring to practise this *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, he must be in solitude and all alone. It is evident that the object of this injunction is to safeguard him from the disturbing influence of external distractions hindering his steady mental application to the practice of such *yōga*. However, it should not be forgotten that it is also possible for a man to be all alone in solitude and have at the same time his mind agitated by all kinds of desires and aversions. These internal distractions, so to speak of them, are even more inimical to the successful practice of meditation and mental concentration than all external distractions. Therefore he must have his mind and body so completely under control as not to yield to the temptations of desire and proprietorship. Self-control and dispassion and non-attachment are in fact very essential requisites for attaining success in the practice of this *yōga*. Indeed, without them, the very practice of it becomes impossible.

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
नात्युच्छ्रितं नातिनीचं चेलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥ ११ ॥
तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यतचित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युञ्ज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥ १२ ॥

11—12. He should establish for himself, in a place free from impurities, a firm seat, which is neither too high nor too low, and is well spread over with cloth, skin and the *kuśa* grass; and then, making his faculty of attention one-pointed and keeping under control the activities of his mind and the senses, he should sit on that (seat) and carry on (the practice of) *yōga* for (acquiring) self-purification.

The first thing that we have to note here is, that the person, who wants to practise *yōga*, should have a seat prepared and fixed for him in a place which is free from all impurities. It is evident that the seat is intended to be a comfortable one—a *sukhāsana* as they call it in Sanskrit,—for it has to be neither too high nor too low and has to be covered with cloth, skin and the sacred grass. Sitting on such a covered seat, he has to carry on the practice of *yōga*. We shall soon learn in what kind of posture he has to sit on that seat while practising *yōga*. And now we are told that the first mental operation connected with this practice is to make the *manas* or the faculty of attention one-pointed. Let us try to understand clearly what this means. It appears to be an accepted conclusion among psychologists that it is in the very nature of attention to be one-pointed, which implies that it is not at all possible for the human mind to attend to more than one thing in one and the same moment. The truth of this psychological position is not in any way affected by the successful performance of *ashṭāvadhāna* and *śatāvadhāna*, which some of you may have observed. In the exhibition of these feats of multiplex attention and correct memory known by the name of *avadhāna* in Sanskrit, pointed attention is directed to several things successively, and there is no such thing as the operator attending to more than one thing in exactly one and the same moment of time. It is therefore perfectly true that, when it is looked at in this light, attention is naturally one-pointed. But, when the learner of the practice of *yōga* is called upon to make his *manas* one-pointed, his endeavour has to aim at directing his attention steadily and continuously to one and the same thing for a long time through a protracted series of successive moments. Obviously, therefore, this one-pointedness

of the *manas* is different from the one-pointedness, which is the natural characteristic of the well-known mental operation that is called attention. How the mind is ordinarily unsteady, and attention is apt to flit from thing to thing, must be known to most of you from your experience. It is for the purpose of preventing this tendency of attention to be flitting and unsteady that the activities of the mind and the senses have to be kept under control, in as much as these activities in their uncontrolled condition form the main cause of the wandering of attention. That no man with a wandering attention can succeed in arriving at *yōgic* realisation through mental concentration is quite self-evident. There is yet one more point worthy of being taken note of in these stanzas; and that is, the statement that one should undertake the practice of *yōga* for attaining self-purification. This does not indicate that self-realization in the state of *samādhi* is not the final aim of the practice of *yōga*. On the other hand, what it means is, that, even in cases where the final result of self-realisation is not yet accomplished, the result of self-purification is produced as a matter of course. This self-purification really means freedom from the taint of *karma*—a freedom which, as you know, can be acquired only through absolute unselfishness and non-attachment to the fruits of work. I am sure you can all see at once how the self-control and the dispassionate disinterestedness, which have necessarily to be associated as pre-requisites with the practice of *yōga*, make the acquisition of this kind of self-purification through that practice perfectly certain. Accordingly, this self-purification may be taken to be one of the immediate aims of the practice of *yōga*. By it the power of the soul is rendered free so that it may duly realise itself and attain salvation.

Let us now take up the next two stanzas:

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयन्नचलं स्थिरम् ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥ १३ ॥
प्रशान्तात्मा विगतभीर्ब्रह्मचारिव्रते स्थितः ।
मनः संयम्य मच्चित्तो युक्त आसीत मत्परः ॥ १४ ॥

13—14. Keeping the body, head and neck erect, unshakeable and firm, and steadily looking at the tip

of his own nose without casting glances in (all) directions, with a disposition marked by great peacefulness, and without (any) fear, and observing (well) the vow of celibacy, he should hold under control his faculty of attention and become engaged in the practice of *yōga*, having Me in his mind and looking upon Me as supreme.

Here we have further particulars regarding what has to be done by a person who undertakes the practice of *yōga*. The posture to be assumed, while sitting on the already described kind of seat with a view to practise *yōga*, is the first thing to be noted; and it is required that this posture should be such as keeps the body and the neck and the head quite erect and firm and motionless. The object in enjoining such a posture is evidently to make the sitting for the practice of *yōga* as fully wakeful and as little distracting as possible. In what is called *haṭha-yōga*, various forced postures of a difficult and acrobatic character are practised; and the aim seems to be mainly to secure physical health and to deaden that sensibility, which causes the feeling of fatigue and discomfort to come on as the result of keeping the body in the same physical pose for any long interval of time. These heroic exercises are not recommended here; and Patañjali also, in recommending the *sukhāsana*, considers a simple, steady and comfortable posture to be the best for the purpose. The next thing that we have to take note of here is the injunction that, while practising *yōga*, one should not cast glances in all directions, but should keep steadily looking at the tip of the nose with both the eyes. Of all our senses the eye is the most powerful source of disturbance to the concentration of attention; and therefore to prevent the wandering of the eye from object to object is calculated to diminish to a very large extent the natural tendency of attention to flit and to wander. Moreover, modern students of hypnotism are of opinion that the straining of the eye, involved in keeping the vision of both the eyes directed steadily to the tip of the nose, is helpful in bringing about what they call the condition of self-hypnotisation; and concentration of attention and meditation seem to be easy in such a condition. This is perhaps the reason

of the injunction to have the vision of both the eyes steadily directed to and firmly fixed upon the tip of the nose. Then, again, fear and want of internal peacefulness in the mind may easily be made out to be strong obstacles in the way of attaining success in the steady and continuous practice of meditation. Hence internal mental peace and freedom from fear are both rightly declared to be needed. Another requisite mentioned here is, as you know, celibacy. This is required for the purpose of conserving mental energy as well as for the purpose of checking distraction and ensuring dispassion and unselfishness. The aspirant, who tries to practise *yōga* with the help of all these requisite aids for meditation, has further to exercise well his will-power to keep under complete control his faculty of attention, and has also to choose a suitable object for his meditation. Śrī-Kṛishṇa is Himself such a suitable object, in as much as we are told here that the aspirant, while practising *yōga*, should have Him in his mind and look upon Him as supreme. You know that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has already made Himself known as a divine incarnation to Arjuna. Thus for the *yōgin* to have Śrī-Kṛishṇa in his mind and look upon Him as supreme is the same thing as to have God for the object of his meditation. In this respect also Patañjali agrees with the *Gītā*, as he says in one of his aphorisms that the attainment of the realisations in *samādhi* becomes possible through profound devotion to, and deep and steady meditation upon, God as the Supreme Spirit who is ever pure and ever blissful.

I may perhaps mention here that, whatever may be the historical origin of the association of image-worship with Hinduism, there seems to be good reason to believe that the importance of *dhyāna* or continued meditation as a means for the attainment of *yōgic* realisation has played no small part in maintaining that association in the higher planes of Hindu religious thought and life. Indeed higher Hinduism looks upon religion as realisation, and holds that the devotee, whose religious devotion has not yet borne the fruit of self-realisation and God-realisation, is still merely on the way to the attainment of true religion. One consequence of this has been that worship and meditation have become almost synonymous in some of the philosophic schools of Hindu religious thought. The many *dhyāna-ślōkas* known to Hindu religious literature are all

stanzas intended to serve as aids for that fixing of attention which is required in practising continued meditation; and in these stanzas the divine object of meditation is conceived and described in various mythical and anthropomorphic ways, although every cultured Hindu, who knows anything of the philosophy of his religion, readily subscribes to the statement—

न ते रूपं न चाकारो नायुधानि न चास्पदम् ।
तथापि पुरुषाकारो भक्तानां त्वं प्रकाशसे ॥

—"O God, to Thee there is no embodiment, no form, no weapons and no place of abode. Nevertheless, Thou manifestest Thyself to Thy devotees in the form of man." According to this well known and oft-quoted stanza, which I have freely translated, God has neither figure nor form, has no weapons to wield, and is without any particular place of abode; and yet to His devotees He makes Himself manifest in human form. Here there is an open recognition of the ultimate necessity of anthropomorphism even in the highest forms of abstract thought relating to the fundamental realities of religion and philosophy. So long as human thought cannot get out of its own natural mould, this kind of psychological anthropomorphism is inevitable. Nevertheless, material representations of God based on even such inevitable mental anthropomorphism are looked upon by some non-Hindus as forming the basis of a low condemnable idolatry. There may indeed be many causes to account for the currency in certain religions of the worship of material objects and images, such causes as fetichism, totemism, bloody sacrifices, mythology and so on. But no serious student of Hindu mythology and Indian iconography can fail to discover the lofty symbolism associated with some of the images that are used as objects of worship and meditation in higher Hinduism. You may, for instance, take into consideration in this connection that famous *dhyānaśloka* relating to the worship of Vishṇu, which, as you know, runs thus:—

शान्ताकारं भुजगशयनं पद्मनाभं सुरेशं
विश्वाकारं गगनसदृशं मेघवर्णं शुभाङ्गम् ।
लक्ष्मीकान्तं कमलनयनं योगिहृद्ध्यानगम्यं
वन्दे विष्णुं भवभयहरं सर्वलोकैकनाथम् ॥

Here Vishṇu is conceived as the One Lord of All the Worlds and as the God of Gods, who has the universe for His body and is infinite and immaterial like the sky. Accordingly, He is declared to be realisable through concentrated meditation in the heart of the *yōgin*. Since even such an immaterial, all-pervading and all-ruling God has to be conceived by the *yōgin* in his meditation as having a markedly beautiful form with lotus-like eyes and an expression full of love and peace, he is allowed to make his God anthropomorphous, so as to give Him a dark colour and also a serpent-bed, to imagine a lotus to be sprouting up from His navel, and to think of Him as the Loving Lord of Lakshmī, the Goddess of Prosperity and Happiness. The serpent-bed in the image symbolises in the language of myths the mastery of God over time and eternity, and the lotus from the navel indicates that He is the centre and ultimate source of universal creation. The serpent forming the bed of Vishṇu is called *ananta*, the endless one, and *śesha*, the ever-remaining one; it is sometimes called *ādi-śesha* also, which means that it is a certain something the beginning of which always remains to be found out. It is easy to see that what is conceived here is time looked upon both as beginningless and endless. The lotus from the navel of Vishṇu is represented generally as the seat of Brahmā, who is, as you know, the creator in the well known trinity of Hindu Gods. These ideas so symbolised in relation to God are all highly philosophical; and it is under this symbolism that Vishṇu is worshipped in South India as Padmanābha in Trivandram, as Raṅganātha in Srirangam, and as Gōvindarāja in Lower Tirupati, for instance. Moreover, this sleeping God of peace and beauty and love, who is unlimited by time and space and is the ultimate source of universal creation, sleeps the sleep, which is often spoken of as *yōga-nidrā* in Sanskrit, that is, the sleep which allows Him to be ever wakeful in the work of protecting and looking after the welfare of all beings in the universe of His creation. After creating the world and setting it in working order, He does not unnecessarily interfere with its laws. It is hard to see anything like low idolatry in this symbolic representation of God; and when it happens to be helpful to the *yōgin* in his meditation and to others also in their divine worship, there is no reason why it should be condemned: at any rate, I cannot see any such reason. Now let us go on:—

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः ।
शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ १५ ॥

15. By applying himself constantly to the practice of *yōga* thus, the *yōgin* with the (well) controlled mind attains that peace, which is the supreme perfection of the bliss of soul-salvation and is enduringly established in Me.

It must be evident to you that this stanza tells us what it is that the *yōgin* attains as the fruit of his steady practice of *yōga*, God being the object of his meditation. In the course of our study of the fifth chapter of the *Gītā*, we were able to see that the winning of everlasting spiritual peace through God-realisation and God-attainment is the goal of both *karma-yōga* and *jñāna-yōga*. In fact the last stanza of the fifth chapter gives us to understand that, through the *jñāna-yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, it becomes possible to realise God as the Enjoyer of All Worships and Austerities, and as the Great Lord of All the Worlds and the Friend of All Born Beings, and that the *yōgin* thereby attains through that realisation the bliss of supreme spiritual peace. And here in this stanza we are told that this peace is nothing short of what one is rewarded with, when one attains the salvation of *mōksha* or soul-emancipation, and that it is divine in character in as much as it is enduringly established in God. The idea evidently seems to be that, in that state of the *yōgin's* ecstatic vision, which is brought about by the practice of extreme mental abstraction and the withdrawal of the self into the self, there arises in him a divine illumination, in the light of which the soul may be viewed in the perfect purity of its complete spiritual integrity, and may thus be ascertained to possess all those elements of blessedness and peace that appertain to the Divine Essence. To all those, who can understand the full meaning of the statement, that it is in this Divine Essence that we have the full synthesis of Truth, Beauty and Goodness, it must be easy to see that, in the *yōgin's* ecstatic vision of the soul, he himself becomes absorbed, as it were, in the consciousness of the harmony underlying these sublime conceptions of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. In that

transfigured state of the soul of the *yōgin*, all limitations and conflict and inharmony cease, and nothing other than supreme spiritual peace can then be his peculiar and noteworthy characteristic. Spiritual peace like this is certainly the peace, which is enduringly established in God and forms the supreme perfection of the bliss of soul-salvation.

नात्यश्नतस्तु योगोऽस्ति न चैकान्तमनश्नतः ।
न चातिस्वप्नशीलस्य जाग्रतो नैव चार्जुन ॥ १६ ॥

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥ १७ ॥

16. O Arjuna, *yōga* is not (possible) to the person, who eats too much, nor to him who does not eat at all; (it is) not (possible) to him, who is addicted to too much sleep; nor surely to him, who is (ever) wakeful.

17. To him, whose eating and recreation are appropriate, who is appropriately active in (the performance of) work and has appropriate sleep and wakefulness,—(to him) *yōga* becomes the destroyer of (all) misery.

I am sure all of you know that much effort and exercise of will-power are involved in the processes of meditation and mental concentration. We have already learnt that it is in the very nature of the mind to be easily swayed by the objects of the senses, and thus to flit from perception to perception and be unsteady and hard to control and to keep under restraint. Since meditation and mental concentration form the chief means by which *yōgic* realisation is to be attained, it follows as a matter of course, in consequence of the close natural relation between the body and the mind, that all those physical conditions, which are conducive to the putting forth of the mental effort needed for the practice of meditation and mental concentration, must be helpful to the attainment of *yōgic* realisation. We may very well go even so far as to say that, unless the body is carefully kept in a healthy and manageable condition, it is not possible at all to utilise

the mind for the attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation through the practice of *yōga*. To overload the stomach by eating too much does not certainly tend to keep the body in a healthy and manageable condition. Too much food in the stomach acts so as to draw an abnormally large quantity of blood into that organ, depriving thereby the brain of its normal blood-supply; and the result is that the brain becomes incapacitated to do its work. It is undoubtedly within the range of common human experience that over-eating and steady mental effort are incompatible with each other. Therefore *yōga* is not possible to the person who eats too much. Similarly it is not also possible to him who does not eat at all. When one becomes a prey to hunger or is troubled by the pangs of starvation, meditation and mental concentration are altogether out of the question. The weakening of the body caused by excessive fasting tends to weaken the power of the brain through which the mind has to work. Temperance in eating—neither eating too much nor eating too little—is, therefore, what is wanted for the proper practice of *yōga*. Again, we are told that similar temperance is required in the matter of sleeping as well, since too much sleep and too little sleep are both harmful for the attainment of success in the pratice of *yōga*. This success depends upon continued conscious mental effort direced towards the practice of meditation and mental concentration; and the sleeping man, who is unconscious of himself in consequence of his sleep, cannot put forth such conscious effort. Although the man in sound sleep and the man in the *yōgic* state of *sāmādhi* are both oblivious of the external world, the latter has to be intensely aware of himself, while the former loses himself also in the oblivion of sleep. In addition to this incompatibility between sleep and *yōga*, there is the fact that too much sleep is apt to make the mind dull and incapable of steady and sustained exertion; and without such exertion the practice of meditation and mental concentration is impossible. That too much sleep is harmful to the attainment of success in the practice of *yōga* need not mean that too little sleep is helpful to it. On the other hand we are told here that too little sleep is quite as harmful to it as too much sleep. Physiologists tell us that sleep gives rest to the brain and re-invigorates it after exhaustion. Hence inadequate sleep means inadequate relief from mental fatigue, with the attendant consequences of weakness and irritability.

This condition of the mind also tends to prevent, as may be easily seen, the achievement of success in the practice of *yōga*. Accordingly an appropriate amount of both food and sleep is very necessary to all those who endeavour to attain success in the practice of *yōga*. It is further pointed out here that all such persons should have due recreation and a due quantity of work to perform from day to day. Work and recreation are known to be very good antidotes to listlessness and disheartening pessimism ; and they markedly encourage good digestion and sound health. Therefore they are also of great value to those who engage themselves in the practice of *yōga*. By taking advantage of all these aids and avoiding at the same time all hindering obstacles, the attainment of success in the practice of *yōga* becomes quite possible ; and on the attainment of that success, the peace, which is the supreme perfection of the bliss of soul-salvation and is enduringly established in God, becomes the highest and the most valuable possession of the fortunate *yōgin*. And is it any wonder that to him *yōga* becomes the destroyer of all misery ?

यदा विनियतं चित्तमात्मन्येवावतिष्ठते ।
निस्पृहः सर्वकामेभ्यो युक्त इत्युच्यते तदा ॥ १८ ॥

18. When the well-controlled mind abides solely in itself, then one, (becoming) free from desire in relato all objects of desire, is called a man of *yōga*.

Here we have another description of the *yukta* or the man of accomplished *yōga*. You may remember that, from a previous stanza in this chapter (VI. 8), we learnt that the man of accomplished *yōga* is that kind of *yōgin*, whose nature is such as is apt to be pleased and satisfied with knowledge and spiritual realisation, who is immoveably aloft and has conquered the senses, and to whom a clod of earth, a stone and gold are all alike in value. This sort of description of the man of accomplished *yōga* mainly takes note of certain comparatively external characteristics that are observable about him. But the description given in the stanza here goes, as we may say, to the root of the matter ; here we are shown what that internal psychological condition is, which is in reality responsible for those external characteristics. By the practice of controlling the mind,

steadying the attention and concentrating it upon a suitable object of meditation, what one succeeds in achieving is, as we are told here, the complete self-abidance of the mind: in other words, the thinking principle of consciousness, which is usually called *chitta* in Sanskrit, functions in this peculiar state of self-abidance entirely in relation to itself. When the *yōgin's* mind is made so self-abidant, then he perceives himself from within; and in this perception there is this great pecularity—that the subject of perception is at the same time the object of perception also. When in this manner the subject and the object become unified in *yōgic* perception and the outward functioning of the *chitta* is altogether obstructed, the perception of external objects necessarily ceases at once and entirely. With the cessation of external perception, the common physiological sensations of pleasure and pain, which are associated with such perception, cease also as a matter of course; and when pain and pleasure thus cease to fall within the range of experience, desire cannot be evoked at all in relation to any external object of desire. Accordingly, it may be taken to be a full and accurate description of the man of accomplished *yōga* to say that he has succeeded in making his *chitta* or thinking principle of consciousness abide in itself. The nature of such self-abiding consciousness is explained by an appropriate example in the very next stanza, which runs thus:—

यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता ।
योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मनः ॥ १९ ॥

19. The way, in which the lamp-flame, which is in a (still) windless place, does not shake,—that has been considered to be a thing similar to the self of the *yōgin*, who has his mind under control and is engaged in practising *yōga*.

When a lamp burns in a perfectly still place, its flame is seen to be unshaking and one-pointed. In the same manner the consciousness of the *yōgin*, who has, through the practice of continued meditation, succeeded in attaining the state of *samādhi*, is also steady and one-pointed and does not flicker or flutter. Indeed the

comparison given here means more. I may here draw your attention to the fact, that it is a somewhat common thing in Sanskrit philosophical literature to compare the principle of consciousness to the flame of a lamp, for the reason that such a flame, by its intrinsic luminosity, reveals itself and at the same time reveals other objects by illuminating them with its own light. Our principle of consciousness also, as we know from our experience, reveals itself to us and at the same time enables us to become aware of other objects as well. Even like the English word *consciousness*, the Sanskrit word *jñāna* is used to denote the principle of consciousness as well as the awareness which is its characteristic. To distinguish these two things which are thus denoted by the same word *jñāna*, the former of them is said to be *dharmi-bhūta-jñāna* and the latter *dharma-bhūta-jñāna*; that is, the *jñāna* denoting the principle of consciousness is that, which is characterized by the characteristic of awareness, while the other *jñāna* happens to be this very characteristic of awareness. Moreover, the steady, unquivering one-pointedness of the flame is intended to indicate that, in the condition of internal *yōgic* concentration, there is no movement of the mind at all, and that, nevertheless, it is not all darkness within, but is, on the contrary, concentrated light. The self-luminosity of consciousness and its self-awareness become intensified by this process of concentration, and give rise to *yōgic* realisation in the state of *samādhi*. Some of the characteristics of the state of *samādhi* are given in the following four stanzas; and they are—

यत्रोपरमते चित्तं निरुद्धं योगसेवया ।
यत्र चैवात्मनात्मानं पश्यन्नात्मनि तृप्यति ॥ २० ॥

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥ २१ ॥

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।
यस्मिन् स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥ २२ ॥

तं विद्याद्दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥ २३ ॥

20. That, wherein the mind, restrained by the practice of *yōga*, ceases to operate, and wherein (one) further becomes delighted indeed by seeing the self through the self in one's (own) self:

21. That, wherein (one) experiences that absolute happiness, which is supersensuous and (yet) comprehensible by the intellect, and, staying wherein, (one) does not move (away) from the truth:

22. That, on obtaining which (one) does not consider (any) other gain (to be) superior to it, and on being established in which (one) is not agitated even in consequence of great misery:

23.—Understand that separation from (all) association with pain to be what is denoted by *yōga*. That *yōga* has to be practised with determination and with a mind devoid of despondency.—

In this description of *yōga*, it is worthy of note that it is said to be 'separation from all association with pain'. This evidently means that the attainment of success in the practice of *yōga* makes it utterly impossible for the *yōgin* to come into contact with pain: in fact he comes to be as uncognisant of pain as if it did not at all exist in so far as he was concerned. The idea is not that he is made absolutely callous to pain; on the other hand, we have to understand that his mind, having been so restrained as not to be allowed to operate from within outwards, ceases to perceive pain-producing objects. Patañjali's definition of *yōga* as चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः—as the obstruction of the outward functioning of the thinking principle of conciousness—is worth bearing in mind in this connection; and the cessation of the external operation of the mind through the restraint put upon it by means of sustained will-power is exactly the same thing. On preventing the mind's function of external perception in this manner, what happens to the *yōgin* is that he is enabled to realise within himself his own self with the aid of that very self. That is, he is led on by his *yōga* to the achievement of what is

known as self-realisation; and the state of self-realisation is one of intrinsic joy and delight. This joy, being independent of the outer activity of the senses, has naturally to be constant and unvarying in its nature, and may well form the basis of an absolute happiness which is supersensuous. It is often said that, if you take away from the mind such of its contents as are contributed to it by the various senses, you have still the mind left intact; and so long as it is possible to maintain that the essential basis of the mind is not a product of the senses, it must also be possible to understand that the state of self-realisation is one of open and luminous awareness and unconditioned joy. It is almost self-evident that the *yōgin*, who attains this kind of self-realisation, comes thereby into close contact with what constitutes the essential basis of the reality of his own existence: in other words, he comes to know and to comprehend his own soul and through it the truth regarding the reality of his being. Since, in this condition, his vision is altogether in-turned and thrown upon the essential basis of his being, he is not subjected to any distraction, and the object of his in-turned vision remains unchanged and ever within the field of his superconscious cognition. Accordingly, he does not move away from the truth, so long as he continues to maintain this condition of self-realisation. To be brought thus face to face with the truth of the reality of one's own being is of course a gain of supreme value and importance; and we have been told already that, through the realisation of this reality, there arises an intrinsic joy which is absolute and supersensuous. This joy is rightly conceived to constitute an element of that cognition of the self which constitutes self-realisation; and that is why the self is described to be *sat*, *chit* and *ānanda*, that is, to be existence, consciousness and bliss. In this way, it even partakes of the divine nature. To so perceive the divinity of one's own nature is indeed a gain, than which nothing can be greater or more important. The experience of the intrinsic and absolute blissfulness of the basic reality of our being necessarily cuts us off from all contact with the pains and pangs prevailing in the external world of phenomenal perception. Therefore the seer, who has succeeded in seeing and knowing his own self and is in the enjoyment of the supreme bliss of self-realisation, cannot be affected by these pains and pangs of the phenomenal world; and even such

things as may cause great misery to common men and women cannot have the power of producing any trouble or agitation in the mind of the internally illumined *yōgin*. When the very contact with the pain-producing agencies of the external world is cut off from the in-turned mind of the *yōgin*, it is no wonder that even the most momentous of such agencies does not affect him in the least. Thus *yōga* may well be looked upon as the separation of one's self from all association with pain, although self-realisation happens to be the chief thing that has to be accomplished by it. Indeed, the absolute separation of one's self from all association with pain is a natural and necessary consequence of *yōgic* self-realisation.

We are further told here that the practice of this *yōga*, whereby self-realisation and freedom from all association with pain may be attained, is a worthy endeavour fit to be adopted by aspirants after the salvation of soul-emancipation. You may remember our having been told already that this path of self-realisation through the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration is not suited for all people to follow ; in fact it is not at all intended for all. Only a select few are fit to follow it; and among the few that undertake the practice of this *yōga*, all do not succeed in attaining self-realisation and that blessing of absolute painlessness which comes in its wake. Success is hard to achieve even by the earnest aspirant, who has the needed fitness for the practice of *yōga*. That is why we are told in this context that *yōga* should be practised with determination and with a mind that is devoid of despondency. Without unshaking determination and unbaffled hopefulness, the attainment of success is considered to be impossible in the practice of *yōga;* and success therein is so valuable and so inspiring that no trouble or trial for its sake can appear to be too great to any one who has set his heart upon achieving it. Please let me close our work here for to-day.

XXX

In our last class we were mainly dealing with what may be looked upon as the external aspect of how the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration is to be practised. We then learnt about the kind of place that is to be chosen for carrying on this practice, about the nature of the seat to be used and the bodily posture to be

adopted for the purpose. You may remember that we were further taught that the aspirant, who undertakes the practice of this *yōga*, should eat neither too much nor too little, and should in the same manner sleep neither too much nor too little, and that he should keep his mind free from contact with all sorts of distracting agencies and influences. Thus practised, the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration tends to make the mind of the aspirant steady and one-pointed like the flame of a lamp burning in a perfectly still place; and the self-realisation resulting subsequently makes him absoutely happy and blissful, cutting him off entirely from all association with pain. In the stanzas, which we are going to study to-day, the internal conditions required for the attainment of success in the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration are mentioned; and the nature of the bliss associated with the self-realisation arising from such *yōgic* success is also described. Then our attention is clearly drawn to the ethical value and usefulness of this *yōga* of meditation and realisation, so that we may know what bearing it really has upon the determination of right conduct. Let us now proceed to see how these things are all dealt with here.

सङ्कल्पप्रभवान् कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः ।
मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः ॥ २४ ॥
शनैश्शनैरुपरमेद्बुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ २५ ॥

24. Giving up altogether all desires born of wilful volition, and controlling well the (whole) collection of the senses on all sides by means of the *manas* entirely,—

25. One should very slowly stop the (outward) working (of the mind) with the aid of the intelligence that is grasped by (firm) resolve; and then, causing the *manas* to become fixed within himself, he should not think of anything whatsoever.

You know that we have been all along understanding by the word *manas* what I have called the faculty of attention, and that from a stanza in the third chapter (III. 42) we have been able to make out the nature of the psychological process of perception and also the relative gradation of the various faculties involved in that process. To bear these things in mind now will be of help to us in understanding the details of *yōgic* concentration as described here. The first thing that the aspirant is called upon to do is to give up altogether all desires that are due to wilful volition. As you are aware, these desires have to be distinguished from those others which are actuated by felt natural wants for the necessities of life. The desires that are produced in us in consequence of the necessity of our having to satisfy hunger and thirst, for instance, cannot be said to be born of wilful volition. The desires arising from love of luxury and enjoyment— they are born out of wilful volition. It is not in our power to give up altogether the former of these two kinds of desires: and the endeavour to give them up is certain to prove unfruitful as well as unwholesome even in the case of the aspirant who undertakes the practice of *yōga*. To such a person it is indeed much more injurious to give free scope to the desires of the latter kind, that is, to the desires that are due to love of luxury and enjoyment and are therefore born of wilful volition. That is why he is called upon to give up all these desires altogether. Without this preliminary exercise of will-power, no person can restrain and control the outward play of his senses by means of the faculty of attention, although in psychological rank this faculty is, as we have seen, superior to the senses and may well control them. As a matter of fact, it is our proneness to love the pleasure and to hate the pain produced by the perceptive operation of the senses, that is really responsible for the difficulty we feel in withdrawing the mind from its contact with the external world; and the advice, that the aspirant after the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration should give up altogether all desires born of wilful volition, is therefore well given and deserves to be well received and duly adopted.

The next point we have to note is that the aspirant has to control the entire collection of his senses wholly by means of his faculty of attention, and that this control should be exercised on all

sides so as not to allow anywhere any weak point, through which they may break out to indulge in the perceptive experience of the external world. The object to be kept in view by the aspiring *yōgin* is that his work should be a fully conscious endeavour on his part to make himself become uncognisant of the external world; his non-cognisance of the external world should not be the result of the dullening or the deadening of the senses themselves. For this purpose the fixing of the *manas* within is necessary; and its outward functioning must be stopped. Such a prevention of the external working of the *manas* and the fixing of it within cannot be accomplished, except with the aid of a resolute will guided by good intelligence. An unintelligent exercise of a stubborn will cannot lead to the attainment of the object aimed at; because the absence of the guidance of intelligence in the determination of the action of the will is certain to make the means adopted unsuitable for the end kept in view. Similarly, the will, which is not sustained by firm and unshaking resolve, howsoever intelligently its action may be guided, cannot accomplish the mental concentration aimed at by the *yōgin*; because the absence of the sustaining resolve is apt to make the will both weak and wavering, so as to hinder the *yōgīn's* mental concentration. And even when the *yōgin* is in command of the guiding intelligence and the sustaining resolve, mental concentration of the kind required for the attainment of *samādhi* cannot be accomplished at once, as its accomplishment comes only as the result of repeated practice, for the reason that the forces propelling the mind outwards are ordinarily so strong and difficult to resist. Moreover, the special instruction given here is that the aspiring *yōgin* should fix his *manas* within himself and should not think of anything whatsoever. This clearly means that the object of his meditation during the process of the practice of mental concentration should not be anything other than the self of the *yōgin* himself; all ordinary objects of attention and thought and desire have thus to be banished from the field of his mental activities. This peculiar condition of objectlessness in relation to his mind is inevitably needed before his attaining self-realisation through mental concentration; and it should not be difficult for you to see that mental concentration under this condition of objectlessness is neither quickly nor easily accomplished. The outward working of the mind can be stopped only slowly; and

therefore the condition of objectlessness in relation to the mind can also be accomplished only slowly. When the outward play of the mind is successfully prevented and attention is entirely fixed within, so that it has nothing other than the self itself for its object, then it is that self-realisation results.

यतोयतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥ २६ ॥
प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनं सुखमुत्तमम् ।
उपैति शान्तरजसं ब्रह्मभूतमकल्मषम् ॥ २७ ॥

26. Whithersoever the *manas*, which is flitting and unsteady, moves out, he should everywhere there subject it to restraint and bring it under control (so that it may be engaged) altogether within himself.

27. Indeed, there comes supreme happiness to this (kind of) *yōgin*, whose mind is tranquilled and *rajas* allayed, and who has become (like unto) *Brahman* and is free from (all) impurity.

The first of these two stanzas tells us distinctly that the *manas*, or the faculty of attention as we have been understanding it, is ordinarily flitting and unsteady. We have already seen how difficult it is to command the *ekāgratā* or one-pointedness of attention, that is, how difficult it is to concentrate the attention continuously for any length of time on one and the same object. It is for acquiring the power to make attention easily and continuously one-pointed, that the practice of *dhyāna* or meditation is prescribed as one of the important processes of *yōga*. Ordinarily, in *dhyāna*, the attention is concentrated upon some mentally conceived object; but here the teaching relates to the peculiar process of concentrating attention without thinking of anything whatsoever. We are in fact taught here how to practise what is in Sanskrit called *nirālambana-dhyāna* meaning unsupported meditation, that is, meditation in which attention becomes concentrated in spite of there being no object on which it may be concentrated. The withdrawal of attention from all other objects,

so as to concentrate it altogether upon what happens to be the object of meditation, is what is required in the practice of *dhyāna* in the ordinary course. But, in the case of this *nirālambana-dhyāna*, the *yōgin* has to withdraw his attention from wheresoever it moves out, and has to keep it under control and wholly engaged within himself, even when it is given no directly perceived or mentally conceived object to become concentrated upon; and this peculiar self-concentration of attention, it is certainly more difficult to practise than ordinary *dhyāna*. And yet, it must be evident to many of you that it is only success in the self-concentration of attention, which leads to true self-realisation and gives rise to the spiritual bliss naturally and inseparably associated with it. This bliss is in fact nothing other than the manifestation or unfoldment of the intrinsically blissful nature of the spirit, that is, of the *ānanda* constituting one of its essential elements. It is, however, to be remembered that there is a school of thought among *Vēdāntins*, which maintains that objectless meditation is a psychological impossibility; and such *Vēdāntins* interpret this kind of concentration to mean the mere prevention of the desire hankering after the pleasures and objects of the senses. What we are here called upon to understand from the second of the two stanzas is, that that success in concentrating attention, which comes by the practice of *nirālambana-dhyāna*, granting it to be possible, removes the obstacles, which ordinarily stand in the way of our realisation of the intrinsic and infinite *ānanda* of the spirit. That is why we have been given here a description of the condition of the successful and perfected *yōgin*, so that we may infer therefrom the nature of the supreme happiness that comes to him as the result of his *yōgic* success. That characteristic—in the *yōgin's* condition as described here—which we may first take into consideration, is that his *rajas* is allayed. You all know that *rajas* indicates that tendency of *prakṛiti*, by which we, men and women, are impelled to be aggressively active in seeking and securing pleasure, power and fame and the things that contribute to their acquisition and enjoyment. The allaying of this tendency is not possible so long as the mind continues to be freely out-going so as to come into contact with the objects of the senses; and so long as it is not allayed, the mind continues to be storm-tossed, so to say, by desires and aversions, by attractions and repulsions, and by

attachments and hatreds. With the allaying of the *rajas*, however, comes the tranquillisation of the mind; it is no longer storm-tossed, but gets into a condition of self-contained calmness reflecting the infinite bliss of the self and fully bringing into light its own spiritual essence. This freedom from the disturbance and the unwholesome working of the pairs of opposites, such as desires and aversions, leads, as you know, to the purity which is the result of the effacement of the internal imprint of *karma*. You may in this connection think of the *Upanishadic* teaching—

यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि स्थिताः ।
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवत्यत्र ब्रह्म समश्नुते ॥

—that, when all the desires which are found in the heart of one are relinquished, then the mortal becomes the immortal and attains the *Brahman* here. The mortal becoming the immortal implies the effacement of the birth-and-death-compelling taint of *karma*; and the successful *yōgin* becoming like unto the *Brahman* means the same thing as that he attains the *Brahman* here. When the material and other limitations, to which the spirit is ordinarily subjected, are reduced to the vanishing point, as is done in the case of such a *yōgin*, and the spirituality of the spirit is made as fully manifest as possible, then it is a natural and necessary consequence that he becomes like unto the *Brahman* in his supremely happy state of self-realisation. This is clearly brought out in the next stanza.

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी विगतकल्मषः ।
सुखेन ब्रह्मसंस्पर्शमत्यन्तं सुखमश्नुते ॥ २८ ॥

28. Applying himself always in this manner, the *yōgin*, freed from impurity, enjoys easily that limitless bliss, which consists in experiencing the *Brahman* so as to be in close touch with it.

We have tried to see how the internal illumination, resulting from the attainment of success in the practice of *yōga*, gives rise to supreme spiritual peace and happiness, and how it also frees the *yōgin* from the taint of *karma*, so as to enable him to acquire a true

and well-realised knowledge of the essential nature of his own basic principle as an ever-blissful spirit which is conscious of its own reality and intrinsic blissfulness. When, through the incessant practice of *yōga*, the *yōgin* becomes free from all the impurities due to the taint of *karma*, he not only acquires true self-knowledge, but also, in consequence of this very self-realisation, becomes the enjoyer of the supreme bliss which is infinite and divine. This bliss is described here as consisting in experiencing the *Brahman* so as to be in close touch with it. Let us try to understand what this means. My idea is that this manner of describing the spiritual bliss, attained by the *yōgin* through success in the practice of *yōga*, amounts to saying that his bliss is very nearly like the supreme bliss that is attained in the state of final beatitude or *mōksha*: it is the highest enjoyment of bliss that one may have in the embodied condition, since *mōksha* presumes the disentanglement of the soul from material embodiment and all its worldly attachments. The bliss of the *yōgin's* self-realisation is not the same as the bliss of the emancipated spirit in the state of final beatitude, but closely touches it and gives the aspirant a foretaste of what it is like, and how peaceful and illuminating and indeed how blissful it is. The successful *yōgin's* bliss is not exactly that of the *mukta*, but is the bliss of the *jīvan-mukta*; and from what we are told here we have to understand that the difference between the bliss, realised by the *yōgin* in his embodied condition, and the bliss enjoyed by him in the state of the soul's final freedom of salvation, is merely one of degree. Although this bliss of *yōgic* realisation is so supreme and of such high spiritual value, it is said to come to the *yōgin* quite easily. This does not mean that the attainment of the required success in the practice of *yōga* is a matter of no difficulty, but implies that all the difficulty, which is involved in attaining success in the practice of *yōga*, is almost as nothing when compared with the infinite blissfulness of the bliss of the spirit, which comes as a matter of course to the successful *yōgin*. Please observe how high his privilege is, and how well illuminated and happy and serene he must be while experiencing this supreme bliss.

सर्वभूतस्थमात्मानं सर्वभूतानि चात्मनि ।
ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा सर्वत्रसमदर्शनः ॥ २९ ॥

29. The person, who has applied himself (well) to *yōga* and has (come to be characterised by) equality of vision in relation to all (beings), sees himself as existing in all beings and all beings (as existing) within himself.

The object, with which the aspirant practises meditation and mental concentration so as to attain success in *yōga*, is not merely that he may, even in this embodied life of his, obtain a foretaste of the bliss of the *Brahman*, which is the bliss of final beatitude. If that were the object, the aim of *yōga* would certainly be to encourage selfishness of a superior description. To be impelled to seek the enjoyment of the blissful experience, which is consequent upon successful self-realisation, is not in any way less selfish in its nature than to be impelled to seek the pleasures and pleasurable objects of the senses. But I have already pointed out to you that to the *yōgin*, whose one aim is to attain the salvation of soul-emancipation, all the accessory results arising from the practice of *yōga* are of no consequence, however valuable and wonderful they may be in themselves. Even as he is known to discard the well-known eight *yōgic* powers, he does not care to make the acquisition of a foretaste of the bliss of final beatitude the chief purpose of his life of steady and strenuous application to *yōga*. The unfoldment of the intrinsic powers and essential characteristics of the self in the course of the process of self-realisation is perfectly natural; without such unfoldment the self-realisation resulting from *yōga* would be no true realisation at all. This certainly does not entitle us to mistake any of the natural consequences of the *yōgin's* self-realisation to be the main aim of his austere life of well sustained *yōga*. To commit such a mistake is all the more inexcusable, when we know that the salvation of the soul is undeniably the supreme end of life, and that this end can be attained only through the practice of absolute unselfishness. Nothing should make our seeking of salvation a merely selfish endeavour; for, in such a case, the salvation that is sought would itself become unattainable. If the end and aim of the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration were to give to the successful *yōgin* a foretaste, so to say, of the bliss of the soul's final beatitude, then it would be perfectly right to maintain that this

yōga simply serves a selfish purpose, and cannot therefore prove to be a means for the attainment of that salvation, which is achievable only through absolute non-attachment and entire unselfishness. The experience of the foretaste of the bliss of final beatitude may be, and in all probability is, as far as we can make out, very different from the experience of the pleasures of the senses. Nevertheless, we cannot rightly say that the desire to have the former experience is entirely unselfish, while the desire to have the latter experience is sordidly selfish. No means, which naturally leads to a selfish end, can cause the accomplishment of an object that can be achieved only by unmixed unselfishness.

The solution of this difficulty is to be found in the fact, that Śrī-Kṛishṇa has not taught us, that the end and aim of the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration is to make the successful *yōgin* have, through self-realisation, a foretaste of the bliss of final beatitude. According to this Divine Teacher, the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration is a sure means for the killing of selfishness, in as much as it gives rise to the *yōgin's* equality of vision—that equality of vision, which enables him to see himself as existing in all beings and see all beings as existing within himself. It is to ascertain, to his own satisfaction and the satisfaction of all lovers of wisdom, the truth and rationality underlying this equality of vision and make it practically certain in its operation in life, that the *yōgin* is called upon to practice the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. Its aim is purely ethical, although it gives rise to certain interesting and important psychological results as it progresses towards its natural culmination in self-realisation; and the fulfilment of this ethical aim is dependent upon the acquisition by the *yōgin* of what is mentioned here as equality of vision. The meaning underlying this expression corresponds to what has been given in a stanza (V. 18.) in the previous chapter, wherefrom, you may remember, we learnt that wise men look alike upon a Brahmin and a *chaṇḍāla*, upon a cow and a dog, as also upon an elephant and a dog. It is the acquisition of this wisdom of the wise man, which happens to be the ethical aim of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. As we have already seen, the self-realisation, resulting from the practice of this

yōga, enables the *yōgin* to grasp well the distinction between the soul and the body. To him the immateriality, immutability and immorality of the soul—which is *sat*, *chit* and *ānanda* in essence—becomes as distinctly evident as the materiality, mutability and morality of the body. The man, who has succeeded in the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration to this extent, will naturally be able to see at once that it is his soul which forms the basis of his enduring reality, even as it happens to be the enjoyer of the supreme peace and illumination and happiness that are associated with successful self-realisation achieved through the practice of this *yōga*. What he thus realises in relation to himself, he will naturally extend to other embodied beings, so as to arrive at the conviction that the souls, embodied in other embodiments than his own body, are as essentially spiritual as his own soul, and are therefore equally immaterial, immutable and immortal. Similarly, he will arrive at the conviction that, like his own body, all other embodiments are material, mutable and mortal. Thus the difference between one embodied being and another embodied being is due not to any difference between the spiritual entities or souls, which constitute the enduring basis of their reality, but is dependent upon whatever difference there is in character and configuration in relation to their embodiments. This high degree of similarity between souls in their nature, as learnt from *yōgic* self-realisation, has, as you know, led some teachers to postulate their essential identity, notwithstanding the fact that the doctrine of the essential identity and oneness of souls forms no part of the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy. It is, moreover, worth bearing in mind that the belief in the doctrine of the essential identity and oneness of souls is in itself capable of being based on *yōgic* realisation, and tends to support strongly the truth and value and need of the great ethical lesson of equality to be derived from the *yōgin's* equality of vision in relation to all embodied beings.

Whether it is through the realisation of the essential similarity of souls, or through the realisation of their essential identity, that the *yōgin* becomes blessed with the power of equal vision, it cannot but be evident to you that the very equality of his vision in relation to all embodied beings will make him see himself as existing in all beings and also see all beings as existing within himself. I am now in this

hall; a little later I shall be in another building—much smaller and much less majestic than this. Now what difference does that make in so far as my personality is concerned? Shall I become a different person, when I go into another building? Surely not; no change in my abode is calculated to bring about a change in respect of my personal individuality. Even in the other building I continue to be myself. In the same way we may easily realise that the soul, which is within one embodiment does not become essentially changed, when it gets into another embodiment. To believe in the immortality of the soul and the doctrine of *karma* is necessarily to believe also in the doctrine of re-incarnation. It is not required now to dilate upon the logical integrity of the philosophical position maintained conjointly by these three important beliefs, as we have already dealt with them and their inter-relations. In addition to the knowledge of the essential similarity of the souls, there is the further knowledge that the soul, which is now inhabiting one body, may happen to inhabit some other body at another time: and when a soul passes from one body to another, it in no way becomes essentially changed. Seeing that all souls are alike in essence, and that any soul may happen to occupy any embodiment under suitable conditions, the *yōgin* is bound, as a matter of course, to see himself in all beings and see also all beings within himself. He may well say—"My soul is now within this human body. There are similar souls in other human and non-human bodies. What is now my soul, which is at present in a human body, had other human as well as non-human embodiments at other times and might have such other embodiments in the future also. Therefore it is really as if I have been in all other beings". The soul, for instance, of the dog and the soul of the man being similar, and merely the body of the dog being different in configuration from the body of the man, he who knows this similarity and dissimilarity and is aware that it makes no difference to the soul, whether it be in a human or in a canine body,—what will be his attitude in regard to the dog? He will, on looking at the reality underlying the dog, most certainly feel —"There is a soul within that canine body; it may have been in the course of its successive re-incarnations in a human body and may again resume its abode in such a body. Similarly, the soul, which is now in my human body, may possibly have occupied a canine body

at one time and may well do so again. Thus when I take the soul, which happens to be the true basis of the enduring reality of all beings, into consideration, I see at once that the man may become the dog and the dog may become the man. Indeed, potentially the man is in the dog, and the dog is in the man". The *yōgin's* self-realisation is, as you know, intensely real, being based on his concentrated introspection; and hence his conviction in respect of the potential existence of himself in all beings and of all beings in himself is certain to be equally real and equally strong.

I now ask you the question if it is at all possible for such a *yōgin* to be selfish? Paradoxical though it may seem, the very selfishness of such a *yōgin*, as has arrived at the real conviction that all beings exist in him and that he himself exists in all beings, is apt to become an altruism of the most comprehensive type. He cannot think of the good of himself as dissociated from the good of all beings; nor can he think of the good of other beings as unconnected with his own good. In his case ethical egoism and altruism become so completely blended and inter-related as to have the distinction between them almost completely abolished; and when, in this manner, the 'individual' happens to be merged in the 'all' and the 'all' in the 'individual', the absolute preponderance of altruism in the life of the *yōgin* becomes fully assured. It is for securing this kind of unselfishness, which is well based on personally cognised reality, that the *yōgin* is called upon to practise meditation and mental concentration. Every one grants quite willingly and readily enough the reasonableness of people endeavouring to accomplish their own good as they understand it; but few there are, who equally readily recognise the obligatoriness of working for the good of others. Most people are apt to say—"When I know what is good for me, it is right and proper that I should try to secure it fully for my advantage. But when I know what is good for others, how am I bound to work to secure it for their advantage?" To such as these, who recognise the rationality of egoism in ethics but are unable to see the rationality and obligatoriness of altruism, the self-realisation, which is like that of the *yōgin*, who succeeds in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, is well calculated to be a wonderful eye-opener. It will show them how the distinction between one self

and another self is unconnected with the nature of their basic reality. In the case, where *yōgic* self-realisation culminates, as it is held by some, in the apprehension of the essential identity of all souls, the annihilation of the distinction between individuals, which results therefrom, is quite obvious: where all souls are ultimately and in essentiality one, it is impossible to conceive of the good of any one soul as apart from the good of all other souls. Thus the readily accepted rationality underlying egoism in ethics becomes easily applicable to altruism also, and the obligatoriness of our having to work out in life the good of others stands in no need of any further demonstration. In the other case, however, where self-realisation does not amount to any thing more than the apprehension of the essential similarity of souls, the obligatoriness of absolutely unselfish and altogether altruistic life seems to require further proof, even when through such self-realisation the *yōgin* is enabled to learn that all beings exist in him and that he also exists in all beings. And we are told in the next stanza that this further proof also may become available to the *yōgin*, who attains true success in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. Let us try to learn how this happens.

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥ ३० ॥

30. He, who sees Me in all (things) and sees also all (things) in Me, to him I do not perish, and he also does not perish to Me.

It is evident that this stanza deals with what we may call the *yōgin's* God-realisation. From a stanza in the fourth chapter (IV. 35.) we learnt that, with the aid of the wisdom, which the seers of truth teach us, it becomes possible for us to see all beings in their entirety in each one of us and then to see all of them in God. There it is clearly understood to be a higher realisation to see all beings in God than to see them in one's self; and those, who do not directly alight upon these realisations, are naturally expected to learn the wisdom, which is based upon them, from those that have had the realisations themselves and have thus become seers of truth. God-realisation is explained here to consist in seeing God in all things and

all things in God, even as complete self-realisation consists in seeing one's self in all beings and all beings in one's self. We may gather from this that to the *yōgin*, who has succeeded in achieving self-realisation, the way to God-realisation is easy, in as much as the manner of the two realisations is so very similar. However, to those, who are common persons like us without any *yōgic* realisation, there is a certain amount of difficulty in conceiving that all things are in God at the same time that God Himself is in all things. When we say that all things are in God, what do we ordinarily mean? We mean that God is the container, and that all things are contained in Him. When we again say that God is in all things, then the things turn out to be the containers of God and God becomes the contained Being. Hence we have to conceive God to be both the container and the contained at the same time. Here in fact is our difficulty; and we can get over it, if we make out that in this description of God, the relation of the container to the contained is in no way brought into conflict with the other relation of the contained to the container. The chief idea, which we have to bear in mind in connection with this description of God, is, that He pervades all beings in the universe and through that same pervasion sustains them and the universe. From our own psychological experience, it is possible for us to see how every embodied being may have a soul within it, and how the body of every such being is a material instrument of the soul and is ultimately supported and sustained by it. Think of the universe as the body of God, and of God as the Soul of the Universe. Indeed, the *Īśāvāsyōpanishad* says that all this universe and all the things that live and move in it happen to be the habitation of the Lord. God, who is thus the pervading Supreme Soul of the universe, is also its sustainer. Since He pervades the universe, He is contained in it: and since he sustains the universe, it may be said to be contained in Him.

To make this relation between God and the universe clear to us, there is given in the *Gītā* (VII. 7.) a very interesting and instructive illustration. Śrī-Kṛishṇa has declared, as we shall soon learn,—"The whole of the universe is threaded through by Me in the manner of the collections of gems in a necklace." We may easily imagine how, in a necklace of precious gems, the gems are all sustained

and held in position by the thread that runs through them even though that thread is actually contained in them. The thread is in fact the upholder of the gems. While running through them, it not only supports them but also helps to keep each of them in its proper place. When the thread breaks, what happens to the necklace? It at once ceases to be itself: it is no longer a necklace. To fix every gem in its proper place, to maintain it where it is, and to make all the gems go together to form a beautiful necklace, we want a thread to run through them and to uphold them. The contained thread is thus the sustainer of the necklace. When we understand this, we may easily see how apt an illustration it is to compare the all-pervading God of the Universe to the thread that runs through a necklace of gems. It at once explains and gives to us a conception of how God penetrates all beings in the universe and is at the same time the everlasting sustainer of all those beings. To be satisfied with the possibility of this conception may be enough for us and others, who, like us, are not *yōgins* of accomplished success. The successful *yōgin*, however, is literally a seer; he sees the omnipenetrativeness of God and the consequent sustentation of the universe by God. The expression used here in the Sanskrit stanza is *paśyati*, which means that the *yogin* 'sees' God in all beings and all beings in God, and that this 'seeing' is with him a matter of direct realisation through personal experience. The first realisation, which comes to the successful *yōgin* in the manner of direct personal experience, is self-realisation; and the next realisation, which comes to him, is God-realisation. In more than one place in the *Mahābhārata*, we find it stated that, from out of the mind of the *yōgin*, who has attained self-realisation, God flashes forth before his internal vision, in the manner in which the lightning flashes forth from out of the rain-cloud. To such a *yōgin*, God-realisation is in most cases a natural and necessary outcome of self-realisation, and it happens to be an illuminating revelation of immense spiritual value. It is good for us to remember here that the self-realisation of the successful *yōgin* has two aspects—one aspect, in which he realises himself as existing in all beings, and the other, in which he realises all beings as existing within himself. Similarly, his God-realisation also has two aspects—one, in which he realises God as existing in all beings, the other, in which he realises all beings as

existing in God. Thus the two realisations of the *yōgin* may be practically looked upon as four distinct aspects of his internally illuminated spiritual experience. However, it has to be said that there are some, who consider these to be four distinct *yōgic* realisations. According to the view, that the individual self is essentially identical with the *Brahman*, self-realisation cannot be different from God-realisation, in as much as this latter has to consist simply in the perfection of the former realisation. In any case it is evident that God-realisation is a higher realisation than self-realisation.

It is believed by some that there may be cases, wherein the attainment of success in the practice of *yōga* culminates in mere self-realisation, and that in such cases the ascent from self-realisation to God-realisation may not take place at all. So far as the adoption of the rule of *samatva* or of equality in life is concerned, self-realisation is in itself fully competent to authorise and uphold it. God-realisation gives to that rule an undoubtedly supreme authority and moral value. Nevertheless, it may be contended that the ethical life, which is supported by the rule of *samatva*, becomes obligatory even in relation to that *yōgin*, who has only attained self-realisation but not attained God-realisation, and that such a *yōgin* also may succeed in winning the final freedom from the bondage of *samsāra* and the consequent course of unending re-incarnations. These are problems, which we need not discuss here in detail in this context. But what we have positively to know in connection with the stanza under exposition is, that it is at all times absolutely impossible for the *yōgin*, who has attained God-realisation, to say—"There is no God". How can he deny the existence of God, when God Himself has become the direct object of his inner vision and inmost personal experience? His God-realisation is bound to fill him in with God-consciousness; and he is thereby certain to become intoxicated with God, so that he can never feel, even for a brief moment of time, that there is no God. To him God is never non-existent, never perishes: he always lives in the enjoyment of the transcendental glory of the everlasting presence of God. To him the whole of the universe is a holy divine shrine, and his own heart the holy of holies therein. Such a person,

living thus in the ever-felt presence of God, becomes dear unto God, and is always inspired and guided by God. Very often and even for great lengths of time, many good and earnest men and women feel in life that they are God-forsaken: during those depressing periods, their life is so lustreless and uninspired that they vainly sigh for the guidance of God to enable them to cross safely what then appears to them to be a shoreless ocean of dark misery and dire despondency. A feeling of this kind can never come to the *yōgin*, who is always full of the consciousness of God: he can at no time be God-forsaken, that is, God will never be non-cognisant or unmindful of him. Indeed, even as God does not perish to him, he never perishes to God. Divine insipration and guidance are always certain to be available to him in all conditions of his life: thus is he privileged to be loved and looked after by God. Why it is, that he is so highly blessed with the grace of God, comes out from the next stanza; and let us now turn our attention to it.

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥ ३१ ॥

31. He, who, having established himself in oneness is devoted to Me as existing in all beings,—that *yōgin*, although (he may be) living in all manner of ways, (still) lives in Me.

It is, as you know, in the state of *samādhi* that the *yōgin* attains both self-realisation and God-realisation. When, however, he comes back to the condition of common consciousness, waking up from what we may call his *yōgic* trance, even then both these realisations of his are apt to be operative upon his mind. One of the effects of these realisations is evidently to enable him to establish himself in oneness. What this establishment in oneness means, it is not easy to make out exactly. About it there is difference of opinion among the well-known commentators on the *Gītā*. One interpretation is that the *yōgin's* realisation in the trance of *samādhi* establishes him in the belief that the *Brahman* is one only without a second and that all this universe is indeed the *Brahman*. Another interpretation is that he becomes established in the belief that the God, who penetrates and sustains the multiplicity of all the various

forms of beings in the universe, is one and the same. In the way in which, in relation to the multiplicity of the gems that are threaded together to form a necklace, we see the unity of the thread that runs through them, in that same way the *yōgin* sees the oneness of the immanent and all-penetrating God and becomes thereby established in the belief that the God realised by him is one and only. There is a third interpretation in which the oneness mentioned in the stanza is understood to relate to the *yōgin's* devotion to God, requiring that he should not be devoted to anything other than God. Through this kind of singularity in his devotion to God, he may become established in oneness. It may be easily seen that the realisation of the absolute oneness of God must necessarily give rise to such a singularity of devotion. Again, to be established in oneness may refer to the *yōgin's* one-pointedness of attention, requiring that, in the ordinary wakeful condition also, he should be devoted to God with the same concentration of attention as during the practice of *yōga*. Anyhow, there is no doubt that this establishment in oneness is one of the important effects of the *yōgin's* God-realisation, an effect which impels him to see God everywhere and in everything. That God-intoxicated persons can and do see God everywhere and in everything is well illustrated by a story, which I have heard in relation to Kabīr, who was, as you know, a Mahommedan by birth and became a famous Hindu saint under the spiritual influence of his Śrī-Vaishṇava preceptor Rāmānanda. Some of you also may have heard the story ; it is indeed so widely current. Once, when Kabīr went to the Ganges at Benares to have his daily bath, he placed the bread and butter needed for his day's breakfast on one of the lower steps of the *ghāt* leading down to the river and plunged into the sacred water ; and, as he was taking his bath, a dog came near and carried off the bread, leaving the butter behind. As soon as he saw this, he became ecstatic, quickly came out of the water, took up the butter that was left behind and ran after the dog, looking upon it and crying out in song to it as his God and offering to it the butter also, so that his God might not have from him mere unbuttered bread as an oblation. So goes the story. Ecstasy of this kind is apt to seem strange to most of us ; but among God-intoxicated *yōgins* and saints and devotees, Kabīr is in this respect no exceptional personage. To them all, with their perfected God-vision, God manifests Himself

everywhere and in all beings. Evidently, therefore, it is more than possible for the successful *yōgin*, who has been fortunate enough to attain God-realisation, to be single-mindedly devoted in deep love to God as the omnipresent Lord and Life of the Universe.

To the *yōgin*, who, in the ordinary wakeful condition, is so deeply devoted to the omnipresent God, there are no limitations of the law: in whatsoever manner he may live, he always lives in God. It makes no difference whether such a *yōgin* lives the life of the Hindu, or the Mussulman, or the Parsee or the Christian: indeed it matters not whether he is Jew or gentile, Christian or heathen, Mussulman or *kāfer*, or Hindu or *mlēchchha*. When the attainment of God-realisation makes the *yōgin* so full of God-intoxication, he need not bind himself down to any particular plan of life or system of thought or school of religion and law. The various plans of life and thought and religion and law, that are adopted by various human communities, are all of them good, each being good in its own way and in its own time and place. But the *yōgin*, to whom God has become an object of direct personal experience so as to enable him to see God everywhere and in all beings, stands in no need of any of these plans or systems to regulate his life and lead it along the right lines; he becomes, as they put it in Sanskrit, an *ativarṇā-śramin*, that is, a person, in relation to whom the regulations of caste and order, as found in our various scriptural law-books, have no binding force whatsoever. It is not meant to convey by this that he is free to lead a riotous, unlawful, and unrighteous life. On the other hand, what is intended to be conveyed is that, in his case, the leading of the selfish and sinful life has become so utterly impossible, through the reality of his inner God-perception, that no law need impose any limitation upon his conduct and no regulation need offer any guidance to direct its course aright. His freedom is the freedom of the perfected moral man, of the true saint from whose very nature all tendencies in favour of sinning and unrighteousness have been completely removed and destroyed. It is of course a different question to ask, if the man, who has not attained God-realisation and has not become God-intoxicated, may disregard the limitations of the law. The answer to such a question is obvious: since it has not become wholly impossible for him to stray away

from the straight course of the blameless moral life, since he is still prone to be influenced by temptations encouraging sinful unrighteousness, he cannot safely do away with the control and guidance which laws and regulations offer. It cannot be said of him that, in whatsoever manner he lives, he always lives in God. It is surely safer for him to obey the law than to disregard the law; for it is only by obeying the law that he may hope to become fit to rise above the limitations of the law. The freedom of the perfected *yōgin*, arising from his God-realisation and consequent God-intoxication, is such that, when he discards the regulations of life laid down in the scriptural law-books, he cannot thereby be said to transgress the law. But in the case of all other persons like us, to disobey those regulations can never be less than the transgression of the law. To try to be actually free, when one is not fit to be free, can never be helpful to the healthy growth of freedom either in the individual or in society. The unique fitness of the God-intoxicated *yōgin* to be free to live the life he likes is in itself a positive proof of his accomplished moral and spiritual perfection: and let us make sure that there is no misapprehension about it in our minds. Because it becomes, through his God-realisation and consequent God-intoxication, impossible for him to live at any time otherwise than in God—impossible to violate the moral law or to sacrifice righteousness, —it is no wonder that God is particularly gracious to him, loves him and is always mindful of him; and his well established spiritual freedom to live the life of his own choice can never give rise to any undesirable or harmful consequences.

आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमो मतः ॥ ३२ ॥

32. O Arjuna, he is understood to be the highest *yōgin*, who looks at the happiness, or, it may be, the misery of all (beings), with equality (of vision) and in similarity with himself.

This stanza brings to light what ought to be the most important aim of the *yōgin* in practising *yōga*. We have already seen that neither the acquisition of extraordinary *yōgic* powers nor the

opportunity to have a foretaste of what is like the bliss of beatitude can be such an aim. Even the self-realisation and God-realisation, which he attains, are looked upon as worthy and valuable, because they serve to authorise and enforce the great moral law of equality in the life of the *yōgin* and through him in the life of all human communities. Since to *know* the better is not always and necessarily to *do* the better, it is quite possible for a *yōgin*, even after the attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation, not to be able to follow the rule of *samatva* or of equality in life. The *yōgin's* realisations in the state of *samādhi* are certain to produce in him a strong intellectual conviction upholding the appropriateness and obligatoriness of the rule of equality in life; but it is further needed that that conviction should find a full and free expression in his conduct. Till this happens, the *yōgin's* discipline cannot be supposed to have been completed, because a *yōgin* with dormant or undeveloped sympathies is practically no *yōgin* at all. What it is to follow the rule of equality in life, and how important it is to follow that rule,—both these things come out well from the *ślōka* I have just read and translated. The adoption of the rule of equality in life by a person clearly implies that he has the power to realise that all beings in the universe are similar to himself and also equal to one another, and that their happiness and misery are in fact his own happiness and misery. Unless a man instinctively feels happy in the happiness of others and miserable in the misery of others, he cannot be said to be fit to adopt the rule of equality in life; and so long as the practice of *yōga* does not put into the heart of the *yōgin* the power to feel and to act thus, to practically sympathise thus with all the beings in the universe, so long —in spite of all his other realisations and acquisitions of power—he cannot be said to have become the highest *yōgin*. This shows to us the great importance which is attached in the *Gītā* to the rule of equality as a rule of life. According to Śrī-Krishṇa the culmination of *yōga* consists in the fulfilment of its ethical aim as embodied in this rule of equality forming indeed the rule of life which rests upon reality and well-proved truth. Hence another interpretation of this stanza is made possible. We have taken it to mean that the *yōgin*, who, though blessed with success to the extent of arriving at self-realisation and God-realisation, has not as yet acquired the power

to feel spontaneously and in an overpowering manner that the happiness of others is his own happiness and the misery of others is his own misery, has still to make progress to attain the highest perfection of *yōga*. But it may also be made to mean that whoever has acquired the power of universal sympathy, so as to be able to adopt the rule of equality well in life, is the highest *yōgin*, whether he has or has not himself gone through the practice of *yōga*. The usefulness of the *yōgin's* practice of *yōga* lies partly in the demonstration of the ensured rationality of the ethical rule of equality in life, but even more largely in its helpfulness to enable people to acquire and cultivate that power of universal sympathy and love, which is required to set that same rule in actual operation fully and freely. It is therefore doubly true to say that he alone is the highest *yōgin*, who is able to look at the happiness or the misery of all beings with an equality of vision arising out of their essential similarity to himself; and it will do us all good to learn from this, that the highest aim of each of us in life ought to be to relieve the misery of others and thereby feel that his own misery has been relieved, and to work for and achieve the happiness of others and feel that the happiness, which he brings to others, is really happiness brought to himself.

Let us here close our work for to-day.

XXXI

On the last occasion we were dealing with some of the important results arising from the successful practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. After learning that strong resolve, steady attention and complete freedom from all desires are among the essential requisites for the attainment of success in this *yōga*, we made out that, when an aspirant's efforts in this direction begin to bear fruit, he alights upon a peculiar peace and a peculiar bliss, both of which are unparallelled in ordinary human experience. Above and apart from this peace and this bliss, he first attains, as we saw, self-realisation and then God-realisation. Each of these realisations has in fact two aspects, so to say. Accordingly, he is enabled to see, as a consequence of his self-realisation, himself in all

beings and all beings in himself; and similarly, as a consequence of his God-realisation, he becomes blessed with the power of seeing God in all beings and all beings in God. These four results are all of course of great value to the *yōgin*. There is also another result of no less importance, which flows directly from his God-realisation; and this is the freedom he acquires to live the life of his own choice without any fear at all of transgressing the law, since, in whatsoever manner or in whatsoever creed or no-creed he lives, he always lives in God. Another and the last result of *yōga* mentioned by Śrī-Kṛishṇa in this context is one of very great practical importance and ethical value, and consists in the rational justification and actual impetus which the *yōgin's* realisations give to the great moral law of equality in life, enforcing upon him that form of conduct wherein he has almost spontaneously to feel that the happiness of others is his own happiness and the misery of others is also his own misery, and then has equally spontaneously to endeavour to advance that happiness and to remove that misery as far as it is in his power to do so. It is well to bear in mind that Śrī-Kṛishṇa considers this last result to be indeed the most important; it is only on attaining it that the *yōgin* becomes perfected and manifests his moral and spiritual supremacy as a true exemplar of the holy and helpful life of God-intoxication and human compassion and love. On receiving these teachings given by Śrī-Kṛishṇa regarding the nature of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, the manner in which it should be practised, the results which arise from it, and also the rule of conduct which it authorises and enforces, Arjuna wished to have some of his doubts cleared; and with that object in view he put two questions to Śrī-Kṛishṇa. With the consideration of the first of these questions we begin our work to-day.

अर्जुन उवाच—

योऽयं योगस्त्वया प्रोक्तः साम्येन मधुसूदन ।
एतस्याहं न पश्यामि चञ्चलत्वात् स्थितिं स्थिराम् ॥ ३३ ॥

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ ३४ ॥

ARJUNA SAID—

33. This *yōga*, which has been declared by you, O Kṛishṇa, as consisting in (the conviction of) equality, —I do not, owing to (my) unsteadiness, see its enduring stability.

34. Surely the mind is, O Kṛishṇa, unsteady, harassing, powerful, unyielding. I consider its subjugation (to be) very difficult like (that) of the wind.

The expression of Arjuna's doubt, as given in these stanzas, is not in the interrogative form. Nevertheless, it is easy to see that they raise a question. And that question is evidently to know what good there is in giving a teaching, which it is impossible to carry out and live up to in a satisfactory manner. The conviction of universal equality, which the *yōgin* obtains through his self-realisation and God-realisation, is not in accordance with the ordinary outer perception of things by man. The common experience of man in regard to the world of his perception is that it is full of dissimilarities and inequalities. What we, who are not *yōgins*, always see, and what the *yōgins* themselves see, when they have risen from their *yōgic* trance and have got into the ordinary condition of outwardly wakeful consciousness, are in fact these dissimilarities and inequalities. It does not follow from this that the *yōgin's* realisations in *samādhi* are unrelated to truth, and that his conviction of equality is therefore truly baseless. We have already seen that his experience in the state of *samādhi* brings to light the nature of the ultimate facts and phenomena that go to constitute reality. That experience is therefore based on truth and reveals the truth. The dissimilarities and inequalities observed by the outwardly wakeful consciousness are merely apparent, while the underlying similarity and the consequent equality, as perceived by the *yōgin's* inwardly wakeful introspective consciousness, are real and well related to truth. Hence such conduct in life, as is based on the underlying similarity and equality of all beings in the universe, is ethically both rational and appropriate. Nevertheless, it requires no small effort of will to ignore the readily apparent dissimilarities and inequalities, and

to be always attentive to the hidden underlying similarity and the consequent equality, in conducting our lives aright from day to day and hour to hour. That is why Arjuna says that, owing to his own unsteadiness, he is unable to see the enduring stability of that *yōga*, which consists in the firm entertainment of the unshakable conviction of universal equality. This means that, although this conviction may come to a person strongly enough now and then, it is not easy for him to maintain it firmly and continuously in his mind so as to make it stable and enduring and always operative. Whenever there occurs, owing to inattention or forgetfulness or the temptation of some momentary advantage, a break-down in the secured conviction of universal equality, then conduct is apt to become vitiated owing to the resulting neglect of the obligation of living the absolutely altruistic life of ethical perfection and faultlessness. This unsteadiness of man, which thus makes it hard for him to follow well in life the great moral law of equality, is dependent upon the unsteadiness of his mind. In our experience the mind appears to us to be, as if by nature, unsteady and in consequence harassing—leading us from desire to desire and object to object and subjecting us thus to an endless series of trying temptations. In respect of this harassment, which the mind causes, it is seen to be powerful and unyielding; and to curb it effectively, so as to bring it under control, is no easy thing to accomplish. In regard to its unsteadiness and uncontrollable wantonness, it is very rightly comparable to the wind, which bloweth where it listeth, and which indeed there is no restraining or controlling. The subjugation and control of the mind being as hard as the subjugation and control of the unsubduable and uncontrollable wind, to teach the great moral law of universal equality, as the law by which thought and conduct are to be guided in life, is no less than preaching an impossible ideal for practical adoption by man. That is why Arjuna with due humility raises here by implication the question—'What is the good of teaching a lesson, which it is so difficult as to be almost impossible to follow?' It is in answer to such a suggested question that Śrī-Kṛishṇa points out in the following two stanzas how it can be made possible to subdue the mind and keep it under control, and how the *yōga*, whereby the conviction of universal equality is secured, can be successfully practised in life.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम् ।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते ॥ ३५ ॥

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः ।
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥ ३६ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID—

35. Surely, O Arjuna of mighty arm, the mind is fickle and hard to restrain. But it is brought under control by repeated practice and disinterested dispassion.

36. It is my opinion that *yōga* is difficult to be attained by a person of uncontrolled nature; it is, however, possible to be attained, through (suitable) means, by him who strives (for it) and is possessed of a controllable nature.

It is worthy of note that Arjuna is here addressed as a person of mighty arm. It is implied thereby that he is fully capable of heroic endeavour and achievement, and that it is, nevertheless, very natural even for him to feel baffled by the ungovernable unsteadiness of the mind. The reference to his heroic capability in this context is also, as you may see, calculated to put courage and hope into his desponding heart, so that he may not abandon, as altogether impossible of accomplishment, the *yōga* that leads to the assured apprehension and authoritative enunciation of the obligatoriness of the great moral law of universal equality in life. After granting freely that the mind is ordinarily both unsteady and ungovernable, Śrī-Kṛishṇa virtually tells Arjuna that it is not right to hold that the mind cannot at all be brought under control, by pointing out to him that, with the aid of repeated practice and disinterested dispassion, it is quite possible to bring the mind under control so as to correct well its unsteadiness and ungovernability. I believe you know that Patañjali mentions, in his famous work on the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, that practice and disinterested dispassion are the most suitable

means for attaining success in that *yōga*. Indeed the unsteadiness and ungovernability of the mind are as inimical to the processes of meditation and mental concentration as to the enduring maintenance of the conviction in support of the great moral law of universal equality as the most appropriate law of conduct in life. Moreover, a *yōgin* may be supposed to have attained complete success in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, only when he has secured this conviction and is further able to keep it up always and act up to it unfailingly. Therefore, the power to control the mind and keep it under restraint and due guidance is always necessary to the *yōgin*, and it goes without saying that, to those also, who, not being *yōgins*, wish to live the life of equality, this very same power is at least equally necessary. It can be acquired by repeated practice and dispassion, as we are told here. Let us now see what this means. The Sanskrit terms used to denote practice and dispassion here are *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya* respectively. The word *abhyāsa* means repetition; that is doing or saying a thing over and over again: and *vairāgya* means the absence of all attachment due to desire. If, owing to the unsteadiness of the mind, an idea, which you, for some good reason, wish to retain in the mind, slips away from the mind, and if you try again and again to bring it back to the mind and retain it therein,—then there is *abhyāsa*. A repetition of this kind of endeavour is called practice; and it is in the constitution of our nature that power comes through practice. Dispassionate disinterestedness or the spirit of renunciation and non-attachment takes away from the mind all its inducements to be unsteady and ungovernable. It is under the influence of desire and hatred—of *rāga* and *dvēsha*, as they are called in Sanskrit—that the mind becomes subject to all sorts of temptations and is tossed about in this direction and in that, so as to become agitated and unruly. If, however, you are dominated by the spirit of renunciation and non-attachment and are really in possession of *vairāgya*, you can use the force of your will and effectively prevent the mind from being tempted and tossed about in that manner. Let it be noted that even *vairāgya* comes through practice and is capable of being strengthened and confirmed by practice. In the endeavour to keep the mind under control and overcome its ungovernable unsteadiness, you may not appreciably succeed in the beginning; and even after a number of trials your

success may not be quite adequate to the efforts you put forth. That does not matter much, and cannot justify despair. Try over and over again undauntedly with the determination to go on trying till you succeed; and in the end, as Śrī-Kṛishṇa says, the realisation of all the results of *yōga* becomes surely possible. Therefore to teach the great moral law of universal equality as the most appropriate rule of conduct in life is not at all to teach an impossible lesson. Obviously the lesson amounts to this—'Do unto others as you wish that they should do unto you, because the others are so very like unto you as to be yourself'.

Thus in the possibility of controlling the mind rests the possibility of attaining success in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, as also in the endeavour to live the life that is regulated and guided by the great moral law of universal equality. If most of us know the better and do the worse, it is because we give a free and unrestrained scope to the unsteadiness and ungovernability of our minds. That is, we do not earnestly try to control our minds, but allow our nature to continue mostly unguided and uncontrolled. That the man of uncontrolled nature cannot become a *yōgin* must now be to you all quite a self-evident proposition; and it cannot but be equally self-evident to you that self-control is indeed the best and the most effective form of control that may be exercised on one's nature with a view to correct all its shortcomings. Externa control may be sometimes effective enough in checking the undesirable tendencies of the unsteady mind, which is tossed about by all sorts of alluring temptations; but its effect is necessarily apt to be temporary and thus unfit to bring about desirable changes in the grain, so to say, of one's nature. Therefore, he, who has not, by the steady and unwavering practice of voluntary self-control, obtained adequately the power of self-control, can never hope to become an accomplished *yōgin* or to succeed, without actually becoming such a *yōgin*, in the endeavour to live his life according to the great moral law of universal equality. The acquisition of the power of self-control is never an easy matter; and from our knowledge of the weaknesses, which men and women are apt to betray in all human communities in all the various parts of the world, we are perforce led to conclude that among those, who possess this rare

and precious power, there are always some who use it wrongly to serve unethical and unspiritual ends. It is quite as possible to make this power subserve selfishness and sensuality as to make it encourage and uphold self-lessness and spirituality: almost all human potentialities are capable of being utilised either for the evolution of good or for the evolution of evil. Consequently something more than the mere acquisition of the power of self-control—hard though it is to acquire it—is wanted on the part of the person who wishes to become an accomplished *yōgin*. He has to strive to attain success in the *yōga* of meditation and concentration; that is, he has to utilise fully his power of self-control so as to be able to reap well thereby the results of this *yōga*. This striving, if it has to culminate in success, should be carried on with the aid of suitable means, that is, with the aid of such means as are rightly calculated to bring about the fulfilment of the object in view. So, even after the acquisition of the power of self-control, one has to direct that power aright and strive well to attain the appropriate end, and has also to adopt therefor the most suitable means, if one really wishes to secure success in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. The endeavour of the aspirant after this *yōga* is accordingly beset with more than one kind of difficulty; and failure to achieve the end cannot therefore be uncommon or unexpected. Hence arises the next question that Arjuna puts to Śrī-Kṛishṇa.

अर्जुन उवाच—

अयतिः श्रद्धयोपेतो योगाच्चलितमानसः ।
अप्राप्य योगसंसिद्धिं कां गतिं कृष्ण गच्छति ॥ ३७ ॥

कच्चिन्नोभयविभ्रष्टश्छिन्नाभ्रमिव नश्यति ।
अप्रतिष्ठो महाबाहो विमूढो ब्रह्मणः पथि ॥ ३८ ॥

एतं मे संशयं कृष्ण च्छेत्तुमर्हस्यशेषतः ।
त्वदन्यः संशयस्यास्य च्छेत्ता न ह्युपपद्यते ॥ ३९ ॥

ARJUNA SAID—

37. O Kṛishṇa, without attaining success in *yōga*, what state will he go to,—(he), who is possessed of faith (but) is devoid of self-control and has (in consequence) his mind turned away from *yōga*?

38. Without any firm stand and bewildered on the way leading to the *Brahman*, and having (thus) fallen off from both (supports), will he not become annihilated, O Kṛishṇa of mighty arm, like a (piece of) broken cloud?

39. It is proper that You should cut off this doubt of mine completely. Surely, other than You, no remover of this doubt is available.

These three stanzas do not require much in the way of explanation. They raise the question in regard to the fate of the person, who though faithful, fails in the practice of *yōga* owing to want of due self-control. His faith in the efficacy of *yōga* as a means for obtaining the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment is good and strong, and so he readily takes to its practice. But his power to control himself is too poor; and the ungovernable unsteadiness of his mind asserts itself as against his resolve to practice the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. In consequence, he finds himself unequal to the trial of mental strength involved in its practice, and turns away from it. As it is put here, he fails in spite of himself; and naturally, therefore, there is room to think that much blame cannot be ascribed to him. Nevertheless, his is not a position on which he may well be congratulated. With the idea of arriving at the realisations of *yōga* and obtaining through them the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment, he has had to give up the ordinary life of work—the life of disinterested duty duly done, and engage himself in the practice of meditation and mental concentration: and unfortunately for him, he has had to break down and fail in this more ambitious endeavour. Having given up the old position of comparatively greater security, and being

discomfited in the ambitious endeavour to become a successful *yōgin*, he may indeed be said to have lost his firm ground and to have gained nothing more than mere bewilderment in his earnest pursuit of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment through the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. Thus he has had to lose his old support, and has failed to get hold of the new one he had in view: he having fallen off from both supports thus, his unsupported life can only drift along in an absolutely aimless fashion. Now, the question is— will he not go to ruin and become annihilated like a piece of broken cloud? You have probably observed what happens sometimes to a small bit of a broken cloud on a warm day, a bit torn off from a large parent mass of cloud on the one side and moving towards a similar large mass of cloud on the other. The small bit floats along for some distance away from its parent mass and goes on becoming thinner and thinner, until at last, long before it may possibly reach the other mass, nothing of it remains to be seen. The whole of the broken bit disappears; it becomes non-existent as a bit of cloud; and thus it is annihilated. Will the fate of the weak but faithful aspirant after *yōga* be like this? Is this kind of ruin the lot which he is destined to attain? Such is the question here asked by Arjuna; and you all know well what abundant justification he must have had to tell Śrī-Krishṇa that He alone was competent to clear the doubt, and that no other teacher was available, who was in any way like unto Him in respect of the capacity to clear this doubt. In undertaking any trying task, the fear of failure very naturally arises in the mind of the anxious aspirant; and his desire to have an idea of the effect of that failure is also equally natural. The remaining stanzas in this chapter give a complete reply to the question, so anxiously raised here by Arjuna.

श्रीभगवानुवाच—

पार्थ नैवेह नामुत्र विनाशस्तस्य विद्यते ।
न हि कल्याणकृत् कश्चिद्दुर्गतिं तात गच्छति ॥ ४० ॥

प्राप्य पुण्यकृतां लोकानुषित्वा शाश्वतीः समाः ।
शुचीनां श्रीमतां गेहे योगभ्रष्टोऽभिजायते ॥ ४१ ॥

अथवा योगिनामेव कुले भवति धीमताम् ।
एतद्धि दुर्लभतरं लोके जन्म यदीदृशम् ॥ ४२ ॥

ŚRĪ-KṚISHṆA SAID—

40. O Arjuna, ruin will not befall him either here (in this world) or there (in the other). Surely, O dear (Arjuna), no one, who does what is good, will (ever) come to a sad fate.

41.—42. He, that has fallen off from *yōga*, will go to the world of those, who have done meritorious deeds, and live (there) for long-continued years, and then be born (again) in the house of pure and prosperous persons, or come into existence in the very family of such *yōgins* as are possessed of (true) wisdom. That birth, which is of this kind, is indeed very difficult to be obtained in (this) world.

Here Śrī-Kṛishṇa assures Arjuna that the man, who has, in spite of his faith and effort, fallen off from *yōga*, will in no way go to ruin either here in this world or in that other world, wherein he may have to live after his death and departure from here: and it is worthy of note that He bases this assurance on the general proposition that no one, who really does what is good in itself, will ever come to a sad fate. Evidently this means that, if we make sure that what we endeavour to do is good in itself, it is of no serious consequence whether we succeed or fail in the endeavour. Even our failure in the endeavour to do good enables us to reap some worthy reward, provided our endeavour is honest and earnest and is devoted to a good cause. That good comes out of such failures may be seen to be true in the case of individuals as well as in the case of human communities. Let us take any great and beneficent movement in history into consideration, and we are sure to find that, in the early stages, it has had to meet with failure after failure, so much so that the very abundance of such failures has oftentimes disheartened some of the greatest heroes known to human history

But, in spite of all those failures and their disheartening effects from time to time, the movement itself is ultimately seen to succeed; and in its final success we cannot but notice how great is the educative value as well as the constructive power of failure in the endeavour of man to march onwards along the road of progress and civilisation. In fact the failures of previous generations build up gradually that strength which accomplishes success later on in due time. Such indeed has been the case in connection with every great and good movement of note in history. In as much as failures educate and build up power in human communities, they produce good in every generation, although success comes only in the fulness of time. In the case of individuals also, failures in noble endeavours have always a similar educative and power-producing value. That the steady and repeated practice of mental concentration as well as of renunciation leads in the end to the attainment of success in *yōga* is in fact dependent upon this sort of value possessed by failures: here there is a tacit recognition of the important fact that on the foundation of failures success may very well be built up. Failures in themselves can never surely mean, in the case of any worker in any good cause, that he is not to reap any reward and that he is not destined to succeed at all. Even as in history the failures of previous generations in any noble endeavour to achieve progress conduce to the success, which a later generation achieves in relation to that endeavour, even so the failures of an individual aspirant for the attainment of *yōga*, occurring in the course of one or more of his previous lives of re-incarnation, are apt to be conducive to the production of conditions, which, in a later life of his, enable him to attain success as a *yōgin*: and we are told here how this may take place in accordance with the law of *karma* as the determiner of re-incarnation.

Most of you may know that in Hinduism there are two ideas current regarding the nature of the life that comes after death. The earlier of these two ideas may be said to be *Vēdic* in origin, and very closely resembles the conceptions of heaven and hell, which are so very largely current among numerous communities of mankind. Hinduism has its *Svarga* and *Naraka* corresponding to the heaven and hell of other religions. The other idea—which is the later—in

regard to the life after death is *Upanishadic* in origin; and it considers *mōksha* or the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment to be the final destiny of the soul and its everlasting life of infinite bliss. Freedom from the soul-enslaving bondage of *karma*, achieved through living the life of absolute non-attachment and unselfishness, is, as you are aware, declared to be the means for the attainment of *mōksha*. Such a life is generally lived either under the directing influence of a strong sense of duty done for its own sake, or under the illuminating inspiration of a constantly guiding omnipresent and all-loving God. While the disinterested and unattached life of this kind is rightly conceived to be indeed the very best life to live, because of its fitness to serve as a means for the attainment of the everlasting bliss of soul-salvation, it is granted at the same time that the attached life of interest and self-love may also be good or bad morally. The ethics of absolute altruism, in which there is an utter absence of self-love, is the higher ethics of Hinduism; and a life lived in accordance with the sanctions of this higher ethics can give rise neither to *puṇya* nor to *pāpa*. You know that both *puṇya* and *pāpa* can accrue only where the agent of an action is actuated by attachment to the fruits of his action: the disinterested life of non-attachment is too good to produce these binding effects of *karma*. But the other ethics of combined egoism and altruism—which is the comparatively lower ethics permitted in Hinduism—is always apt to give rise to *puṇya* as well as *pāpa*, the former of these resulting from the good life and the latter from the bad life, as judged by the standard of right conduct sanctioned by the code of this mixed ethics of self-love as moderated by the obligation of having to love and serve others than one's self. The faithful aspirant, who fails in spite of himself in the endeavour to attain success in *yōga*, is put into the class of those who live the good life in accordance with this comparatively lower ideal of moral sanction. Since it is quite obvious, that his life is not free from attachment to the fruits of work, *puṇya* accrues to him as a matter of course; and thus his life deserves recognition as one of meritorious deeds.

Another conception to be borne in mind here is, that accrued *puṇya* entitles one to enjoy after death the blessings of paradise; and you know that paradise itself is looked upon among us as a

world of the gods, *Svarga*, for instance, being the world of Indra and his celestial sovereignty. Other such worlds of the gods are also conceived to exist ; and it is to these that the winners of *puṇya* as doers of meritorious deeds in life are led after their death, so that they may in proportion to their *puṇya* enjoy therein the happiness, which forms the due reward of their meritorious life lived here upon the earth. Evidently *Svarga* and other such worlds of the gods are worlds of enjoyment ; and *Naraka* or hell is the world of punishment and suffering intended for the expiation of the *pāpa* accruing from the doing of unrighteous deeds. It must be clear from this that both *Svarga* and *Naraka* are worlds from which it is not possible to work out the soul-salvation of *mōksha ;* they are worlds specially fitted to be utilised in arranging the just distribution of the fruits of *karma.* It is in this earthly world of ours that we make or unmake our *karma ;* and the actual accomplishment of the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment is therefore possible only from here. The duration of one's life in a world like *Svarga*, which is thus a world for the enjoyment of the happiness consequent upon the acquisition of *puṇya*, is very naturally determined by the amount of one's *puṇya* itself : and the commonly quoted scriptural statement—क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति—distinctly tells us that, as soon as a man's *puṇya* is exhausted through enjoyment in the world of *Svarga*, he is sent back to this earthly world again, there to work out his life under the full control of the law of *karma*, either in the direction of seeking and finding the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment, or in the direction of securing once again *puṇya* or *pāpa*, as the case may be, so as to be thereby enabled to enjoy the pleasures of paradise or to suffer the pains of hell.

Thus the aspirant, who, in spite of his faith, fails for want of self-control to attain success in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, goes after death, to those worlds of the gods, to which all doers of meritorious deeds are generally destined to go, lives there for as many years as necessary, and then—when the enjoyment of all the various celestial pleasures fully proportionate to his *puṇya* has been duly finished—he is re-born again in the earthly world of mortal mankind so that he may endeavour once more therein to fulfil,

as far as he can, the divine destiny and God-appointed purpose of his mundane life. Please observe that the *puṇya*, accruing from the work relating to the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, is, in all those cases where the practice is not crowned with true success, enough not only to enable the aspirant to enjoy for long-continued years the celestial pleasures of paradise but also to introduce him into a favourable environment in his next re-birth in this world. From the stanzas, immediately following those that we are now considering, we shall make out that the same *puṇya* further tends to endow him in his re-birth upon the earth with such potentialities as are helpful for the attainment of success in *yōga*. The environment, into which the aspirant, who has fallen off from *yōga*, is led at his re-birth, is accordingly determined by the meritoriousness of his *karma*: and he is therefore made to be re-born either in the house of those who are pure and prosperous or in the family of wise *yōgins* themselves. It is declared that birth in such an environment is indeed difficult to be had; and hence it deserves to be looked upon as a very high privilege. The privileged character of such a birth consists mainly in its offering facilities for living the unselfish life of duty, and also, if so desired, for working to attain success in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. To be born in the house of those who are prosperous and pure is to have worthy and suitable opportunities to live the life of helpful service for the good of others. How those opportunities are utilised is, however, a different matter: the privilege is in having the opportunities for service and sacrifice. When these are properly utilised, they help on the growth of dispassion and non-attachment to the fruits of work, so as to enhance one's fitness for the successful practice of *yōga*. To be born in the family of those, who are themselves wise *yōgins*, is to have the benefit firstly of such a note-worthy heredity and secondly of the example of their *yōgic* life of spiritual effort and realisation. This is benefit of no mean order, particularly to those who are themselves desirous of attaining success in the practice of *yōga*.

तत्र तं बुद्धिसंयोगं लभन्ते पौर्वदेहिकम् ।
यतते च ततो भूयः संसिद्धौ कुरुनन्दन ॥ ४३ ॥

पूर्वाभ्यासेन तेनैव ह्रियते ह्यवशोऽपि सः ।
जिज्ञासुरपि योगस्य शब्दब्रह्मातिवर्तते ॥ ४४ ॥
प्रयत्नाद्यतमानस्तु योगी संशुद्धकिल्बिषः ।
अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धस्ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥ ४५ ॥

43—45. There he recovers the association of that disposition, which belonged to his earlier embodiment; and then, O Arjuna, he endeavours again for the attainment of success in *yōga*, because he is, though wanting in (the power of) controlling himself, carried away by the force of that same practice which he had before. Even he, (who is merely) desirous of knowing (the nature of) *yōga*, transcends the verbal *Brahman:* but the *yōgin*, who puts forth effort with deliberate endeavour, becomes fully free from impurities, attains success in the course of many births and then goes to the supreme goal.

The first half of these three stanzas points out the pre-natal potentialities with which the aspirant, who has fallen off from *yōga*, happens to be endowed in his re-birth as man; the second half mentions the peculiar value of *yōga* as a means for the attainment of *mōksha*, and shows how even the unsuccessful aspirant may, through repeated effort, attain success and reach at last the supreme goal of soul-salvation and God-attainment. On being re-born here, in the family of prosperous persons or of those who are themselves *yōgins*, the failed aspirant of the former state of re-incarnation comes again naturally into association with his old disposition in favour of the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration: that is, in his new birth he has, as the result of his old practice in the previous birth, an instinctive bent of mind in favour of this kind of *yōga*. Among living beings in the world around us, we can all easily observe how habit is prone to become second nature; and this is due to the fact that voluntary activities are, through constant and continued repetition, apt to become involuntary and spontaneous. The Hindu

doctrine of *karma* maintains that this kind of tendency is transmissible from birth to birth in the series of one's successive re-incarnations; and accordingly the process of re-incarnation converts activities, which, having been voluntary, have then tended to become, through practice, involuntary and spontaneous, into pre-natal and instinctive potentialities in favour of those same activities. Modern science also recognises fully the possibility of the conversion of voluntary activities into involuntary and instinctive ones through practice and heredity. Such certainly is the force of practice; it operates not only in the course of a single life, but also produces, in accordance with the law of *karma*, its effects in successive lives of re-birth in the course of one's re-incarnations. This being so, is there anything to feel seriously sorry for in regard to the failure of the aspirant who has fallen off from *yōga* owing to want of self-control? Since the force of practice is able to convert voluntary activities into involuntary and instinctive ones under suitable circumstances, it naturally tends to make the aspirant's weakness of will-power less and less of an obstacle working against the accomplishment of the object kept in view by him. Therefore his failure to accomplish success in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration can spell no ruin to him; it only delays the fruition of his *yōgic* endeavours. If he does not reap the wished for fruit in this birth, he may reap it in the next birth or in any one of the many births coming after that, so that it can never be amiss to look upon him as one, who is assuredly moving along the main road to success. The law of *karma* is, as you know, sure and unfailing in its operation; and as certainly as it is unfailing in its operation, does it help him on to attain the desired success in due time.

And what is the goal to which success in the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration leads? You know already that this goal is indeed nothing less than soul-emancipation and God-attainment. This *yōga* is therefore a highly worthy means for the attainment of what happens to be the supreme purpose of life. How worthy it is, we may make out from the statement that even he, who is merely desirous of knowing the nature of *yōga*, transcends the verbal *brahman*. What is translated here as 'verbal *brahman*' is the expression *śabda-brahman;* and this is interpreted in different ways

by different commentators. One of them understands it as the big thing which is describable by means of words, and hence takes it to mean *prakṛiti* or material nature. Another makes it out to mean the *brahman* which consists of words. Probably many of you know that the word *brahman* is often enough used in Sanskrit in the sense of the *Vēda*, as, for instance, in the common expression *brahmachārin* which denotes a *Vēdic* student. The *Vēdas* therefore, may well be taken to be the *brahman* which consists of words. To transcend the verbal *brahman* is thus either to be free from the influences of material nature or to be able to rise above the comparatively lower form of religion taught in the *Vēdas*. If now you remember that we have been already told (II. 45.) that the *Vēdas* have the three *guṇas* of *prakṛiti* for their subject-matter, and that those, who follow the sacrificial religion of the *Vēdas*, are apt to be actuated by desires, you will at once see that both these interpretations of the expression *śabda-brahman* amount to the same thing, in as much as to transcend it in either sense is nothing other than to seek self-realisation and God-attainment through the adoption of the great moral discipline of absolute unselfishness and the law of universal equality. The fact, that an aspirant has truly become desirous of knowing the nature of *yōga*, clearly indicates that he has learnt to look upon the bliss of self-realisation and God-attainment as being undoubtedly superior to all terrestrial and even celestial pleasures and enjoyments: and it is therefore in this manner evident that he transcends the verbal *brahman*. His very desire in favour of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration shows that he has already begun to see distinctly that the ethics of regulated egoism represents a comparatively lower ideal of conduct leading to a less worthy goal, than the ideal which is based on an absolutely self-less altruism. If the desire urges him on to practical endeavour and action, as it may very well do, he will begin the practice of meditation and mental concentration side by side with the practice of unselfishness, which is, after all, the same thing as what we have more than once called disinterested dispassion. By means of such practice he by degrees gets rid of the bondage-compelling stain of *karma*, so as ultimately to become fully free from all impurities. This process of purification goes on in life after life in the course of his re-incarnations till it reaches completion; and if throughout he puts forth deliberate

endeavour, he is certain to secure success and to reach in the end the goal of self-realisation and God-attainment.

Incidentally in this connection, I wish to draw your attention to two points of interest. In relation to the moral discipline of unselfishness involved in the life of disinterested duty duly done, we learnt, while going through the second chapter (II. 40.) of the *Gītā*, that in that discipline there is neither any loss of effort put forth nor any reverse through obstruction, and that even a little of it delivers one from great fear. The *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration in fact gives rise to realisations, which make the life of disinterested duty and universal equality both logically rational and morally imperative. So, even here, there can be no loss of effort put forth and no reverse through obstruction, and that even a little of it delivers one from great fear. In that other discipline of life, wherein well-regulated conduct on earth is conceived to lead later on to the enjoyment of celestial happiness, both loss of effort and reverse through obstruction are possible; it is in the very nature of interested and egoistic righteousness that practice tends more to confirm the egoism than to enhance the righteousness. In such a life it is very hard to build securely on the foundation of past failures; and success comes only when the race is fully run without deviation and without slackness or backsliding. In transferring our faith from this ideal of ethics to that of absolutely selfless altruism, we rise to an entirely different plane of moral life; and in this life practice perfects the unselfishness of the aspirant, at the same time that it not only assures but also enhances the righteousness of his conduct. It is thus that even a little of this discipline of unselfishness delivers the aspirant from great fear, and that the very desire to know the nature of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration is enough to enable him to transcend the verbal *brahman*. This similarity between the moral discipline of the life of disinterested duty and the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration is the first of the two points of interest here. The second point is one that has a bearing upon the doctrine of *karma*. It may be known to you that this doctrine is considered by some to amount to a kind of fatalism, which abolishes the freedom of the will and kills in consequence all moral responsibility in human life. I have

already tried to show to you that this doctrine inculcates nothing more than that we ourselves make or mar our own future in respect of the attainment of the divine destiny of our immortal souls. From what we are told here in regard to what happens to the aspirant, who has, through want of self-control, fallen off from the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, it is easy to gather that the power of *karma* lies in determining the natural environments into which a person is born, as also in defining and fixing the pre-natal potentialities with which he happens to be endowed time after time in the course of his career of successive re-incarnations. Even modern science believes in the power of well regulated and duly sustained habit in determining the many mental and moral tendencies, which are serviceable in the building up of character, and grants freely that heredity is in general largely responsible for much of the native environments and pre-natal potentialities of all the men and women who are born from time to time to live in the various human communities here upon the earth. A belief of this kind in the power of habit and heredity is not in any manner inconsistent with the belief in the freedom of the will. It is perfectly right to hold that the scope for the free working of one's will is in no way injuriously affected by the previous determination of his native environments and pre-natal potentialities. Indeed, in this respect *karma* does nothing more than habit and heredity, its determining power also being limited to the ordering of the environment and the endowing of potentialities. The doctrine of *karma*, as associated with the allied doctrine of re-incarnation, shows us that the pilgrimage of the soul to God as its final goal, through the road of justly regulated and repeated re-birth, is always carried out effectively by the right exercise of the freedom of the will. It is easy enough to see that given environments and endowments may be utilised either well or ill; that is, either for the attainment of what happens to be the undoubted *summum bonum* of life or for securing ends which are less worthy and less elevating. That, which determines in reality, whether the course of conduct in life under given conditions is to be morally the higher or the lower, is ultimately the will of the person who lives and works. Re-incarnation, as guided and controlled by the supremely just law of *karma*, offers in fact a greatly extended scope for the exercise of the freedom of the will and helps

to make it stronger and more and more effective in the progressive march of humanity towards its God-appointed far off goal of civilisation and the fulfilment of all its supremely moral and spiritual aims involved in the transcendental conceptions of God-attainment and everlasting life.

The next stanza emphasises the peculiar importance of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration as a means for the attainment of self-realisation and God-realisation, and also for the conduct of the consequent life of absolute unselfishness and universal equality. It runs thus—

तपस्विभ्योऽधिको योगी ज्ञानिभ्योऽपि मतोऽधिकः ।
कर्मिभ्यश्चाधिको योगी तस्माद्योगी भवार्जुन ॥ ४६ ॥

46. The *yōgin* is superior to the performers of austere penances, and is considered to be superior even to those who possess (much) knowledge. The *yōgin* is superior to the performers of (religious) rites also. Therefore, O Arjuna, do you become a *yōgin*.

Going through austere penances, acquiring the knowledge of truth and performing various religious rites are all looked upon as means suited for the attainment of piety, purity and all the other moral and spiritual results arising from deep devotion to religion. This stanza does not say that things like penances and rites are of no value as means for the attainment of religious ends; it only says that, as such a means, *yōga* is superior to everything else. As a matter of fact, Arjuna himself wanted, as you know, to retire from worldly life and go away into the forest, there to live the unworldly life of austere penance and asceticism. That is, he wanted to become a *tapasvin*. Fasts and vigils and other such austerities form the ordinary constituents of the life of penance lived by the *tapasvin*, and he subjects himself from time to time to various courses of trying bodily pain, so that he may thereby rise above the influence of pleasures and pains and thus have his will made unshakable and indomitable. As a means for acquiring an ever increasing power of self-control, the life of austerities is not without its value

and usefulness. The strengthening of the power of self-control in this manner represents only a preliminary stage in the larger and more comprehensive and illuminating discipline of *yōga*. Moreover, the effect of the penances performed by the *tapasvin* is largely confined to himself. His penances may chasten him and may also strengthen his determination, and give him the power to live a life that is altogether untainted by sensuality and selfishness; but they cannot in themselves lead to the larger realisations that are achievable through *yōga*. A mere *tapasvin* as such cannot through his *tapas* attain self-realisation and God-realisation; nor can he, through his own personally realised conviction, come upon the rule of universal equality as the truest and the most appropriate guide of conduct. It is thus evident that the *yōgin* is superior to the *tapasvin*. The *yōgin* is again superior to the *jñānin*, who is the man of knowledge. Elsewhere in the *Gītā* the word *jñānin* is, as you know, used to denote the man, who is possessed of supreme wisdom and has arrived at the realisations derivable from success in the practice of *yōga*. It is evident that it cannot be so understood here; the word here means simply a man of knowledge. It is a well-known fact that much knowledge does not always imply much wisdom, and learned fools are not certainly too rare in any part of the civilised world. It is also an equally well ascertained fact that for any one to be too much overborne by thought is to be unfit to work out the practical problems of life and conduct. After all, the knowledge, that one obtains by means of study and thought and consistent philosophising, gives rise at best to a mere intellectual realisation of truth and reality, as forming the foundation of faith as well as of the ethics of right conduct. But, as we have already learnt, the *yōgin's* realisations in the state of *samādhi* are all matters of direct personal experience to him, depending, as they do, on his inner perception of the ultimate reality and the basic truth of things. His wisdom is therefore sounder, surer and more readily capable of being put into practice than that of the mere man of knowledge: hence the *yōgin* serves his own good and the good of society aright more assuredly than the man of mere knowledge can ever do. Thus the *yōgin* may be seen to be superior to the *jñānin* also. The next comparison here is that of the *yōgin* with the *karmin*, or the performer of religious rites. The *karmin* is the man, who regularly goes through all the

religious rites and ceremonies prescribed by the sacred laws, performing every one of them with the greatest care and the most scrupulous attention to details. In that way he may live a very honourable life, a life of piety, purity and absolute harmlessness. The discipline of the ritualistic life, lived well under the guidance of the sacred laws, may certainly do him an immense amount of good; it may improve his power of self-control and enable him to acquire and sustain the faith, which teaches that life has a higher purpose and a nobler destiny than the free and full satisfaction of the unceasingly urgent demands of the senses and the appetites. Nevertheless, it is easy to see that this life, lived under the guidance of the sacred laws ordaining the ceremonial observances of *Vēdic* and domestic ritualism, does not directly aim at *mōksha*, which, as you know, is the salvation of soul-emancipation and God-attainment. The religion of *Vēdic* sacrifices and other similar ceremonial rites has the three 'qualities' of *prakṛiti* characterising its objects (II. 45.); and therefore it gives rise to *puṇya*, when well observed, and is calculated to secure for one the opportunity of enjoying the pleasures of paradise as its due reward. It is believed that it cannot do more than this. But *yōga* does more, as you are aware; it enables the *yōgin* to rise above the three known 'qualities' of *prakṛiti*, and to obtain self-realisation and also the power to live the life of universal equality. Thus it is almost self-evident that the *yōgin* is superior to the *karmin* as well. Now the meaning of the injunction—'Therefore, O Arjuna, do you become a *yōgin*'—must be easily evident to you all. You know that Arjuna's sense of duty, in relation to his having earnestly to fight out the battles of the great war of the *Mahābhārata*, was not strong enough to enable him to rise above the ideas of 'I' and 'mine'. The trouble with him at the time was that he could not bring himself to kill in battle his own kindred and revered preceptors; and this weakness of his due to the selfish feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* could be corrected only with the aid of *yōga*. Without overcoming well these unwholesome feelings, it was impossible for him to live the life of disinterested duty, as based on self-realisation and God-realisation and on the consequent ethical law of universal equality and entire unselfishness. This is why Arjuna was called upon to become a *yōgin*, that is, to conduct himself in the situation in the manner of a *yōgin*.

योगिनामपि सर्वेषां मद्गतेनान्तरात्मना ।
श्रद्धावान् भजते यो मां स मे युक्ततमो मतः ॥ ४७ ॥

47. Even among all the *yōgins*, he, who, being possessed of faith, is devoted to Me, with his inner self directed towards Me,—(he) is deemed by Me to be the best among accomplished *yōgins*.

At the beginning of this chapter, we had to arrange, under three heads, all those who undertake the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration. We looked at them first as those who were desirous of climbing up to *yōga*; then as those who had climbed up to *yōga*: and lastly as those who had accomplished success in their practice of *yōga*. These last, as you know, have in Sanskrit been called *yuktas*; and the expression *yukta-tama* occurring in this stanza has therefore been translated by me as 'the best among accomplished *yōgins*'. You may remember my having told you already that self-realisation constitutes the first step in the success, which the *yukta* or the man of accomplished *yōga* achieves, that God-realisation is the next higher step therein, to which some successful *yōgins* may not rise at all, and that each self-realisation and God-realisation is separately capable of giving to the ethical law of universal equality and absolute unselfishness its truth-born authoritativeness and unquestionable justification. In the case of the *yōgin*, who proves fortunate enough to have both self-realisation and God-realisation included in his *yōgic* success, this same ethical law naturally rests upon a double sanction; and his faith in it is therefore certain to be even more intense and real. It is but right therefore to look upon him as a higher type of *yōgin*. We saw further that the *yōgin's* self-realisation has two aspects, that his God-realisation also has two aspects in the same manner, and that he, who, through self-realisation, has been enabled to see himself in all beings, may be different from him, who, by that same means, has become able to see all beings in himself, even as he, who, through God-realisation, has been enabled to see God in all beings, may be different from him, who thereby sees all beings in God. Accordingly it is conceived that there may be four varieties, among those that deserve to be called accomplished *yōgins*. Moreover, the man

of austerities, the man of knowledge and the man of religious rites, who are all referred to in the previous stanza, are also considered to be worthy of being looked upon as *yōgins*, for the reason that they also practise self-control and endeavour to live a higher life than that of the senses and the appetites. It is therefore not at all hard to think of different kinds of *yōgins* with varying attainments and different degrees of perfection; and we are told here that, among all such *yōgins*, he, who is faithfully devoted to God and has his inner self directed towards God, is indeed the best and the most highly perfected *yōgin*.

Please note that the requirements to be fulfilled by this best of *yōgins* is that he should have faith in God, should have his inner self directed towards God, and should be devoted to God. These things will quite naturally come to a *yōgin* as the result of his God-realisation in his *yōgic* state of *samādhi*. To be able in the state of *samādhi* to perceive God, and then to have no faith in God, is ordinarily impossible. From this, I do not want you to draw the inference that it is only the successful *yōgin*, who has achieved God-realisation, that can command a real and intense faith in God. It is known that such faith is capable of being won by other suitable means as well. The reality and the intensity of a man's faith in God —in whatsoever manner it may have been derived—direct his inner self necessarily towards God. When the inner self of a man is not directed towards God, his faith in God is apt to be merely superficial and not deep-rooted in the heart. To be devoted to God, with the inner self turned towards God, is to have God as the only object of love and worship and devotion. Such a faithful and real lover and worshipper of God, says Śrī-Kṛishṇa, is the best and the most perfect among accomplished *yōgins*. A God-loving, God-worshipping and God-devoted *yōgin* of this kind cannot live his life otherwise than in full accordance with the ethical law of universal equality and absolute unselfishness; and while so living his life, he will never be tempted to feel that, for the goodness of it, he is himself responsible and has to rely upon himself, as his reliance is in fact known to be always and entirely upon God. You must be able to see that in reality there is much difference between the goodness, which is thus God-reliant, and the goodness that is solely self-reliant. One

point we have to note in this difference is that self-reliant goodness is apt to be egotistic; that is, it is quite capable of subjecting the person, who lives the life of self-reliant goodness, to the taint of the feelings of *i-ness* and *mine-ness* at least in some small measure. Unless he gets rid of even this tinge of egotism and self-regard, no *yōgin* can hope to become the perfect man of purity he ought to be. Indeed, the perfection of the *yōgin* finds its consummation, only when even the smallest tinge of self-regard does not pollute the purity of his moral selflessness; and until this consummation of perfection is attained, he cannot be the best of *yōgins*. To know God, to have faith in Him, and to be whole-heartedly devoted to Him, are indeed the things which build up the perfection of the *yōgin*; and these are certain to make him feel that, in all that he thinks and feels and does, he has to serve merely as the instrument of God and carry out His will. Even his own realisations he attributes to the love of God, and makes the grace of God responsible for whatever good there may be in that life of universal equality which he so very naturally lives. Thus the absolute moral selflessness of this best of *yōgins* may be seen to be the result of his complete self-surrender to God.

This stanza, which I have thus far and in this manner explained, brings the sixth chapter to its close; and in so doing, it introduces quite aptly the subject-matter of the next six chapters. The first six chapters, it may be said, deal mainly with self-realisation, and the second six chapters with God-realisation; the third six chapters aim at pointing out the practical application of these realisations to individual and social life in human communities. It is maintained by almost all the well-known commentators on the *Gītā* that, in the light of the subject-matter dealt with, this whole work of eighteen chapters is in reality divisible thus into three large parts consisting of six chapters each. The proper time to survey and study in full the complete plan of the *Gītā* is after we have carefully gone through the whole work and understood the import of all its contents well. Let me, however, before concluding our lecture to-day, draw your attention to the fact that, throughout the *Gītā*, conviction and conduct are looked upon as being more important than the means by which the conviction is arrived at or the manner in which the appropriate conduct is sustained. What I mean to say is this—that the

injunction here intimated to Arjuna, to the effect that he should endeavour to become a God-knowing, God-believing and God-devoted *yōgin*, need not necessarily imply that he was called upon to give up his immediate duty of giving battle to the enemy and to enter instead upon the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration at once, so as to achieve self-realisation and God-realisation by getting into the supra-normal state of *samādhi*. On the other hand, what really appears to be the intended aim is, that he was asked to conduct himself in the manner, in which the *yōgin*, who has arrived at God-realisation and has become God-knowing, God-believing and God-devoted, would conduct himself in the situation, surrendering himself entirely to God and making of himself no more than a ready and willing instrument to carry out the will of God. It was evidently required of Arjuna that he, in living his life of strenuous duty, should always have an attitude of mind, which, in relation to the great question of conduct, would be similar to that of the *yōgin*, who has succeeded in attaining both self-realisation and God-realisation; and the command given here to Arjuna is indeed a command given to all men and women in all ages and lands. This view, that the ethics of conduct is in fact the main topic, which is dealt with in the *Gītā* throughout, and that the psychological and metaphysical foundations of that ethics are taken into consideration in it to prove that the absolutely altruistic morality of the conduct commanded therein is entirely rational and rests unshakably upon the impregnable foundation of truth, is capable of being gathered from both the first and the last stanzas of this chapter. The first stanza, as you know, attaches importance to the doing of duty without attachment to the fruits of work; and the last stanza says that the best and the most excellent *yōgin* is he who knows God, believes in God and is so whole-heartedly devoted to God as to find it quite easy and natural to live the life of duty without attachment to the fruits of work. Nevertheless, the study and examination of the psychological and metaphysical foundations of the ethics taught in the *Gītā* cannot at all be considered to be unnecessary or unimportant. There are indeed many students of the *Bhagavadgītā*, to whom the study of the psychology and the metaphysics taught therein appears to be more important than the examination of the ethics of conduct evolvable from that same psychology and metaphysics. But, as many of you are aware,

we have been all along trying to learn mainly what guidance the *Gītā* gives to us to build up our character well and to conduct our lives aright. Accordingly, we have been all along attaching greater importance and paying greater attention to the ethics taught by Śrī-Kṛishṇa in it than to the psychological and metaphysical foundations of that ethics. The *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration being the means by which it is possible to get at these foundations, it is intelligible why Śrī-Kṛishṇa had to explain its nature and its results at some length to Arjuna, as is actually done in this chapter which is almost wholly devoted to its consideration. Yāmunāchārya, whom I have already quoted more than once, sums up thus under five heads the teachings contained in this chapter:—

योगाभ्यासविधिर्योगी चतुर्धा योगसाधनम् ।
योगसिद्धिः स्वयोगस्य पारम्यं षष्ठ उच्यते ॥

Those five heads are—(i) the process of practising the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration, (ii) the four varieties of successful *yōgins*, (iii) the means to be adopted for attaining success in the practice of this *yōga*, (iv) the certainty of the achievement of that success sooner or later by all those who earnestly endeavour to attain it, and (v) lastly the superiority of the *yōga* of divine devotion to all other forms or aspects of *yōga*. Here we have a comprehensive description of the contents of the sixth chapter, which tells us how and by whom and under what conditions the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration is to be practised, what the results are of attaining success in the practice of that *yōga*, and how these results tend to ratify and uphold the ethical law of universal equality as the most appropriate guide of conduct in life. To know the self, to know God, and then to guide our conduct with the aid of such knowledge,—these things become possible through the attainment of success in the practice of *yōga;* and I now leave it to you to judge its value as a means of discovering truth and of supporting justice, purity and goodness in life. With the next chapter, we begin, as you know, the special study of the great question of God-realisation.

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A GLOSSARY OF THE SANSKRIT WORDS OCCURRING IN THE LECTURES

(Arranged according to the English alphabet).

A

Abhyāsa = repetition, continued practice.

Achala = immoveable.

Achintya = unknowable or unthinkable.

Adhikārin = a worthy and qualified aspirant.

Adhyātmachētas = the mind that is fixed on the soul.

Ādiśēsha = a certain something the beginning of which remains to be found out: the name of a mythical serpent.

Adrishṭa = the invisible religious influence proceeding from the proper performance of a sacrifice and other such religious acts of worship.

Advaita = non-duality; one-ness; the monistic school of the *Vēdānta* philosophy.

Advaita-vēdānta = the system of monistic philosophy founded upon the *Upanishads*.

Advaitin = one who upholds or follows the principles of the *Advaita* philosophy.

Aham = the ego, I.

Ahampadārtha = the ego, the entity denoted by the pronoun 'I'.

Ahaṅkāra = that modification of the principle known as *mahat*, in which the tendency for individualisation in matter makes its appearance for the first time in the evolution of nature according to the Sāṅkhya Philosophy: i-ness; the idea that one is the agent and therefore the owner of the fruits of the work done by one; egotism.

Aikya = one-ness.

Aitarēya-brāhmaṇa = a *brāhmaṇa* relating to the *Ṛig-vēda*.

Aja = unborn.

Ajaḍa = non-inert, conscious, alive.

Ajñāna = ignorance, as indicating the absence of knowledge, the opposite of knowledge or wrong or perverse knowledge.

Akarma = no-work ; passivity.

Akshauhiṇī = an army-corps consisting of 21,870 chariots, the same number of elephants, 65,610 horses, and 109,350 foot-soldiers.

Amṛita = The ambrosia of the Gods conceived to be capable of bestowing immortality on all those who taste it.

Amṛitatva = deathlessness, immortality.

Aṁśāvatāra = partial descent ; partially descended God, or a partially divine incarnation.

Anādi = beginningless.

Ānanda = bliss ; joy.

Ananta = the endless one ; the name of a mythical serpent.

Aṅga = the body ; a constituent limb.

Antariksha = the middle region or the mid-world which is situated between the earth and the heaven.

Antarindriya = the inner organ of perception generally called *manas*.

Antaryāmitva = internal controllership.

Aṇu = atom ; atomic ; spacially limited.

Anubhava = experience ; actually experienced pleasures and pains.

Anushajjatē = has lingering attachment.

Anushaṅga = that which closely follows or goes in the wake of attachment.

Aparyāptam = insufficient, inadequate ; unlimited.

Āraṇyakas = a portion of each of the *Vēdas*, considered to have been given out by certain sages living in the forest and conceived to be fit to be studied in the forest.

Arjuna-vishāda-yōga = the first chapter of the *Bhagavadgītā*—the chapter wherein sorrow and sadness may be seen to have overtaken Arjuna.

Āsana = bodily posture in sitting ; a seat.

Āścharya = marvel ; wonder.

Ashṭāṅga-yōga = the *yōga* of eight constituent limbs ; the practice of concentrated meditation made up of the eight processes, known as *yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*.

Ashṭavadhāna = the feat of memory wherein attention is directed to eight things at the same time.

Asmatprapañcha=' my-world ' as opposed to ' your-world '; the subjective world as opposed to the objective world.

Āśramadharma=duties appertaining to all men and women in the various legally ordered stages of life.

Asūyā=envy ; incapacity to put up with the superiority of others.

Ātatāyin=a felon engaged in a murderous deed.

Atiratha=a warrior who is capable of fighting well against many *samarathas*.

Ātman=the soul or self ; one's self, himself or herself.

Ātmānātmavivēka=spiritual discrimination ; the discrimination of the soul from the non-soul.

Ātmani yat chētas tat=that mind which is fixed on the soul.

Ātmanyēvātmanā tushṭaḥ=satisfied in his own heart with himself.

Atmārāma=the spiritual seer whose delight consists in the realisation of his own soul.

Ātmaratiḥ=one whose delight is in his own self.

Ātma-saṁyama-yōga=the practice of mental self-control.

Ātma-śuddhi=self-purification.

Ātma-tṛipta=one who is satisfied with himself, or one who has acquired spiritual satisfaction.

Ātmavān=one who is well capable of being master of himself ; the possessor of self-mastery.

Avadhāna=attention ; multiplex attention aided by correct memory.

Avatāra=descent ; descent of God ; incarnation of God as man.

Avināśin=having no destruction ; indestructible.

Avyakta=non-manifest.

Avyaya=not subject to change ; indestructible.

Ayukta=he who has not practised the *yōga* of concentrated attention ; the interested worker without the *yōga* of self-lessness.

B

Baddha-jīva=the bound soul tied down to live in matter.

Bhagavad-dharma=the characteristics of God.

Bhagavadgītā=Divine Song: the famous name of the well-known dialogue in the *Mahābhārata* between Śrī-Kṛishṇa and Arjuna treating of the philosophy of conduct : it consists of 18 chapters and forms part of the

Bhīshma-parvan, which itself is one of the 18 *parvans* or books into which that great epic is divided.

Bhāgavata-dharma=the characteristics of the godly man.

Bhakti=loving devotion.

Bhakti-mārga=the way of attaining salvation through loving devotion to God.

Bhakti-yōga=the practice of loving devotion directed towards God.

Bhāvanā=the internal mental impression forming the basis of conceptual knowledge.

Bhaya=fear.

Bhikshu=a mendicant; an ascetic; a monk.

Bhīshma-parvan=one of the eighteen books of the *Mahābhārata*, the book that gives an account of the battles fought between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas during the ten days when the Kaurava army was led by Bhīshma as its generalissimo.

Bhōga=enjoyment of worldly power and pleasure.

Bhōktā=the enjoyer.

Bhūtas=the elements; elementary matter; beings.

Brāhma=the religious authority as well as the wisdom and work of the priestly class.

Brahma-bhūtaḥ=he who has become the *Brahman*.

Brahmachārin=the *Vēdic* student.

Brahma-karma='Brahman-work'; a form of worship which is directed to propitiate the Supreme Being of the *Vēdānta*.

Brahman=the Great Being; the Supreme Being or the Infinitely Big Being; the *Vēda:* the universe as the visible infinite.

Brāhmaṇa=the aristocratic priest; a member of the Brahmin caste; an appendix to a *Vēda*, being a kind of commentary thereon.

Brahmānanda=the bliss of the *Brahman*.

Brahmanirvāṇa=the beatific bliss of the *Brahman*.

Brāhmī=that which appertains to the *Brahman* and is divinely philosophical.

Brāhmī sthitiḥ=the divinely philosophical state.

Bṛihadāraṇyakōpanishad=one of the well-known ten *Upanishads*.

Buddhi=the faculty of intellection: intelligence.

C

Chaitanyasvarūpa=the nature of consciousness; a thing which is of the nature of consciousness.

Chaṇḍāla=an out-caste; a man of horribly wicked life.

Chārvākas=a class of Indian philosophers who are atheistic secularists and materialists.

Chāturvarṇya=the system of the four castes.

Chētas=mind.

Chinmaya=essentially of the nature of consciousness; consisting of the principle of consciousness.

Chintya=cognizable; capable of being thought of.

Chit=consciousness; the principle of consciousness.

Chitta=the mind looked upon as the thinking principle of consciousness.

Chitta-vṛitti-nirōdha=voluntary prevention of the outward functioning of the thinking principle of consciousness.

D

Daiva=appertaining to the gods, such as Indra, Varuṇa, &c.

Daṇḍa=the power of punishment.

Dēhātmabuddhi=the wrong knowledge of mistaking the body for the soul.

Dēhātmavivēka=the knowledge of the essential difference between the body and the soul.

Dēhin=the owner of the body; the embodied soul.

Dhāraṇa=the fixing of the attention.

Dharma=justice and righteousness; virtue; religion; morality; righteousness and duty; characteristic quality.

Dharma-bhūta-jñāna=the characteristic of awareness as appertaining to the principle of consciousness.

Dharmakshētra=a holy plain whereon the Brahminical life of exemplary righteousness and piety is lived.

Dharma-sammūḍha=perplexed as to what duty is.

Dharmasaṅkara=confusion of duties.

Dharma-saṅkaṭa=conflict of duties.

Dharmi-bhūta-jñāna=the principle of consciousness as characterised by the characteristic of awareness.

Dharmya=virtuous, just.

Dharmyatva=righteousness, virtuousness.

Dhyāna=meditation.

Dhyāna-ślōka=a stanza intended to serve as an aid for that fixing of attention which is required in practising continued meditation.

Dhyānayōga=the practice of meditation and mental concentration for attaining self-realisation.

Dravya-yajña=material sacrifice.

Dushkṛita=evil deed; tendency impressed upon the re-incarnating self by evil *karmas*.

Dvandvas=physical or psychological pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, desire and aversion.

Dvandvātīta=he who has risen above the power of the pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, desire and aversion.

Dvēsha=aversion; hatred.

E

Ēkāgratā=one-pointedness of attention.

Ēkatattvābhyāsa=continued meditation of some one thought, idea or experience.

G

Gahanā karmaṇō gatiḥ=the meaning of work is hard to understand.

Ghaṭākāśa=the spacial expanse limited by the earthy walls of a pot.

Gītā=song; the *Bhagavadgītā*.

Gṛihastha=the house-holder.

Guṇa-kṛita-varṇa=caste by quality.

Guṇas=the three 'qualities' of *prakṛiti, viz., sattva, rajas* and *tamas*.

Guru=a teacher or preceptor.

H

Hariḥ=a name of God Vishṇu.

Hariḥ Ōm=a formula of prayer and salutation repeated at the commencement and conclusion of a formal recitation of the *Vēdas*.

Haṭha-yōga=the practice of forced postures of a difficult and acrobatic character.

Hōma=a fire-offering, a sacrifice.

I

Inḍriya-jaya=sense-conquest.

Indriyāṇi=the organs of sense or action.

Īśāvāsyōpanishad=the first of the well-known ten *Upanishads;* it belongs to the *Vājasanēyasamhitā* known as the *White Yajur-vēda.*

Ishṭa=desirable.

Ishṭatva=desirability.

J

Jaḍa=devoid of the power of knowing; inert; unconscious.

Janaka=a father; the title of the kings who ruled in Mithilā in ancient times.

Janma-kṛita-varṇa=caste by birth.

Jātismara=the person who has acquired the power of knowing the nature of his many previous births or states of re-incarnation.

Jātyēkavachana=that use of the singular number by which the whole of a collection of things of the same kind happens to be denoted.

Jīvanmukta=one who has acquired, even while alive here, large freedom from the limitations imposed by the body upon the soul.

Jñāna=knowledge; wisdom; theory.

Jñāna-mārga=the path of knowledge or of wisdom for attaining salvation.

Jñāna-tapas=the austerity of thought.

Jñāna-yajña=a moral form of sacrifice; mental worship.

Jñāna-yōga=the practice of meditation and mental concentration for the acquisition of self-realisation and God-realisation.

Jñāna-yōgin=the person who has attained self-realisation and God-realisation by means of the acquisition of true wisdom through meditation and mental concentration.

Jñānēndriyāṇi=the organs of sense.

Jñānin=the man of knowledge; the man who is possessed of supreme wisdom and has arrived at the realisations derivable from success in the practice of *yōga*.

K

Kāma=desire; an object of desire; wishful will.

Kāmātmānaḥ=those who are actuated by desires and whose nature is made up of desires.

Kāmya=desire-impelled.

Karma=work; act; action done in the previous states of the embodied existence of the soul; the impressed tendency generated in relation to the soul in consequence of acts done in the previous states of its re-incarnation.

Karma-bhūmi=the land of work and worship.

Karmakāṇḍa=that part of the *Vēda* which deals with sacrifices and the rules and rituals connected therewith.

Karma-kauśala=cleverness in work; cleverness in performing well one's duties in life.

Karma-mārga=the path of work and duty; the *Vēdic* path of ritualism.

Karman=work; action; deed.

Karma-pravāha=the stream of *karma*.

Karma-sannyāsa=renunciation of works.

Karma-sannyāsin=one who has renounced works.

Karma-vāsanā=the internal impress left behind by every kind of work so as to determine the potentialities and environments of a soul's coming condition of re-incarnation.

Karma-yōga=the doctrine of work; the right practice of duty.

Karma-yōgin=one who successfully follows the doctrine of work by the due performance of disinterested duty.

Karmēndriyāṇi=the organs of action.

Karmin=the man of work; the performer of religious rites.

Karuṇā=merciful sympathy.

Kaṭhōpaniṣhad=one of the ten well-known *Upanishads;* it is attached to the *Yajur-vēda.*

Kāya=the body.

Kevala-śārīra-karman = merely such work as is required for the up-keep of the body.

Kīrti = fame; good name; reputation.

Kṛipā = mercy.

Krōdha = anger.

Kshāttra = what appertains to the Kshattriya; valour; sovereignty and statesmanship.

Kshattriya = the aristocratic military caste in the Āryan organisation of Hindu society.

Kshēma = the safe-guarding of the good that has already been obtained; order as contrasted with progress.

Kula-dharma = family-virtue; the virtues of family-life.

Kulakshaya = destruction of the family or family-life.

Kumbhaka = the process of keeping the lungs fully filled in with air by refraining from breathing out after taking a deep inspiration.

Kūṭastha = he who is immoveably aloft; the spirit that is uninfluenced by the tendencies and forces of the flesh.

L

Laukikī = that which appertains to the world and is worldly.

Lōka-saṅgraha = acceptance of the world; guidance and control of the world.

M

Madbhāva = my state or my condition.

Mahābhārata = the great Indian national epic of 18 books known to have been composed by Vyāsa.

Mahākāśa = the great expanse of space which is unlimited.

Mahārathas = warriors of the great chariot, *i.e.*, warriors who fight their battles from within a great chariot: technically, a *mahāratha* is a warrior who, riding in a great chariot in the battle-field, is capable of attacking successfully 10,000 foot-soldiers fighting with bows and arrows.

Mahat = one of the principles forming a link in the *Sāṅkhya* chain of universal evolution; that evolved condition of *prakṛiti* in which it is first made manifest and able to produce the many material things making up the universe.

Maitrī=friendly love and satisfaction.

Mamakāra='mine-ness'; the idea of ownership in regard to the results of one's work.

Mama vartma=my path.

Manas=the internal organ of sense or the faculty of attention; mind.

Manīshāpañchaka=a small poem of five stanzas by Śaṅkarāchārya.

Manō-gata-kāma=desires entertained in the mind.

Manō-vāk-kāya=mind, language and body, making up the three instruments of the soul called *trikaraṇa*.

Mantras=*Vēdic* hymns; charms; spells; prayer-formulas.

Manu-smṛiti=an important work on the sacred law of the Hindus attributed to the ancient law-giver Manu.

Mārga=way, path.

Mata=teaching; doctrine; opinion.

Mithyāchāra=a false person of insincere conduct.

Mlēchchha=a barbarian; an out-caste.

Mōksha=the salvation of soul-emancipation; the blissful beatific freedom arising from perfected self-realisation.

Mudita=joyous appreciation.

Mukta=one who has attained the salvation of soul-emancipation; one who is liberated from the bondage of *saṁsāra*.

Mūlaprakṛiti=the same thing as *prakṛiti* conceived to be the root-source of all the material things found in the universe.

Muni=a seer; a sage; one blessed with the intuitive vision of inner inspiration.

N

Na anushajjatē=has no lingering attachment.

Naishkarmya=the state of being unaffected by *karma*.

Naraka=hell.

Nigraha=forcing; coercion.

Nirālambana-dhyāna=unsupported meditation; that kind of meditation in which attention becomes concentrated in spite of there being no object on which it may be concentrated.

Nirdvandva=free from the domination of certain pairs of opposites, such as heat and cold, pleasure and pain, desire and aversion.

Nirvāṇa=salvation; the bliss of soul-emancipation.

Niryōga-kshēma=one who is regardless of both *kshēma* and *yōga*; a person who does not endeavour either to maintain intact the good things that he has already acquired or to obtain more and more of such good things for himself.

Nishkriya=whatever is unengaged in work.

Nishṭhās=positions or stand-points in the philosophy of conduct as applied to life.

Niśśrēyasa=the highest good; the bliss of soul-emancipation.

Nistraiguṇya=free from the mixed influence of all the three *guṇas* or 'qualities' of *prakṛiti.*

Nitya=ever-enduring, eternal.

Nitya-sannyāsin=a person who has for ever renounced work.

Nitya-sattvastha=ever well-established in *sattva*; a person or a being in whom the quality of *sattva* is so preponderant that the other qualities of *rajas* and *tamas* may well be conceived to be almost absent.

Nivṛitti=withdrawal; renunciation.

Nivṛitti-mārga=the path of renunciation and retirement.

Niyama=external regulation of conduct.

Niyata=determined by the sense of obligation.

O

Ōm=the syllable called *praṇava* and understood to denote the Supreme Being; it is usually uttered in association with the recital of *Vēdic* hymns and religious prayers and formulas, and is conceived to have a mystic significance of great value.

Ōm Bhūrbhuvassuvaḥ=a religious formula wherein the Supreme Being is conceived as pervading and controlling the three worlds, the earth-world, the heaven-world and the intermediate world of *antariksha.*

P

Paṇḍita=a learned person; a wise sage.

Pāpa=sin; sinful action; tendency impressed on the minds of people by their evil deeds.

Pāpman=a sinful thing.

Parabrahman=the supremely transcendent and unlimitedly Big Being; God.

Parākprapañcha=the objective world.

Param=an adverb meaning exceedingly well.

Parama=supreme.

Parama-Purusha=the Supreme Person; God.

Parama-purushārtha=the supreme purpose of human life; the salvation of soul-emancipation.

Paramātman=the Supreme Soul of the Universe; God.

Pariprasna=earnest questioning.

Parjanya=a *Vēdic* deity understood to be the god of rain; rain.

Parōtkarshāsahishṇutva=incapacity to put up with the superiority of another in any matter.

Paryāpta=adequate; limited.

Pasyati=sees.

Patita=a fallen man; a person who has failed to observe the religious rules of restraint, and has not performed the duties, appertaining to him and his ordered station in life.

Phala=fruit; result; desired end in view.

Prabhu=lord or master; the master-soul.

Prakṛiti=nature; the material of which the embodiment of the soul is composed; the primordial substance from which all the material things in the universe are evolved.

Prāṇāyāma=the control of breathing; the practice of breath-control.

Praṇipāta=reverential prostration before worshippable persons and objects.

Prārabdha-karma=that impressed tendency of work which has become operative and kinetic in actual life.

Prasāda=clearness; freedom from mental distractions.

Prasanna-chētas=one who has a clear undistracted mind.

Pratyāhara=the withdrawal of the senses from external objects, being one of the eight processes involved in the practice of *yōga*.

Pratyakprapañcha=the subjective world.

Pravṛitti=activity; the active life of aggressive achievement.

Pravṛitti-mārga=the path of the active life of aggressive achievement as opposed to the life of retirement and renunciation.

Puṇya=merit; meritorious deed; tendency impressed on the minds of people by their good deeds.

Puṇya-bhūmi=the holy land; the land of meritoriousness.

Pūraka=the process of filling in the lungs with air by means of a long-continued process of inspiration.

Purāṇas=a class of Hindu sacred writings containing the myths and legends and traditional history of the ancient Hindus.

Pūrṇa=full; fulfilled.

Purṇakāma=one whose desires are all fulfilled.

Pūrṇakāmatva=the state of having no un-fulfilled desires.

Pūrṇāvatāra=a full descent; a complete incarnation of God as man.

Purusha=he who abides within an embodiment; a soul; a person.

Purusha-sūkta=the *Vēdic* hymn which describes the creation of the universe from the Supreme Person (R.V. X. 90.)

Pūrva-mīmāṁsā=the earlier enquiry, so called in relation to the later *Vēdāntic* enquiry regarding *Brahman;* one of the six systems of Hindu philosophy dealing mainly with the question of *Vēdic* sacrifices and their results.

Pūrva-paksha=the statement of the preliminary position in an argument, this position being invariably that of an opponent who has to be attacked and defeated.

Pushpitā vāk=flowery language; vainly flowery language.

R

Rāga=desire, longing; longing for pleasure and pleasurable objects.

Rājarshis=royal sages and philosophers.

Rajas=that 'quality' of *prakṛiti* which represents its highly active condition full of enlivening and aggressive energy.

Rājasa=pertaining to that 'quality' of *prakṛiti* which is known as *rajas.*

Raja-yōga=the king of *yōgas*; the best of the *yōgas;* the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration aiming at self-realisation and God-realisation.

Rajō-guṇa=the 'quality' of *rajas.*

Rāmāyaṇa=the celebrated Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki dealing with the story of Rāma and his wife Sītā.

Rēchaka=the process of exhausting the lungs of air by means of a long-continued act of expiration.

Ṛishayaḥ=sages; spiritual seers; seers of perfected spiritual vision.

S

Śabda-brahman=the verbal *brahman;* the big thing which is denoted by words, *i.e.*, *prakṛiti* or nature; the *brahman* which consists of words, *i.e.*, the *Vēda*.

Sabhā=an association; an assembly.

Sādhana=the means for the attainment of an end.

Samādhi=concentrated attention and mental realisation; the last stage of mental concentration in the practice of *yōga*, the stage, in which the person, practising it, is so fully absorbed in self-awareness as to be altogether unaware of the outside world.

Sama-dṛishṭi=the vision of equality.

Samaratha=a warrior, who, being himself within a chariot, is capable of fighting effectively against another warrior, who also has the advantage of being seated within a chariot.

Samatva=evenness; equality; evenness and impartiality of disposition in relation to pleasure and pain, to success and failure; equality of sympathy and love in relation to all beings.

Samatvaṁ yōga uchyatē=equality is called *yōga*.

Saṁsāra=the course of the soul's recurring re-incarnation.

Saṁskāra=impression left upon the mind by previous acts and experiences; internally impressed tendencies; agreeable and disagreeable mental effects which good and evil deeds respectively produce.

Saṁvāda=a dialogue.

Sāmya=similarity.

Saṁyamin=the self-controlling sage.

Sanātana=everlasting.

Saṅga=attachment, attachment to the experiences and the objects of the senses.

Saṅkalpa=will; thought; desires of the mind; fancied desires.

Sāṅkhya=knowledge; theory; the philosophy expounded by Kapila.

Sāṅkhya-kārikā=the name of a work by Īśvarakṛishṇa which expounds the *Sāṅkhya* philosophy of Kapila in a small number of mnemonic stanzas.

Sāṅkhya-nishṭhā=that philosophic position in the theory of conduct which is determined by speculative and abstract thought.

Sāṅkhya-yōga=the theory of conduct arrived at in accordance with speculative reason.

Sannyāsāśrama=the fourth stage in the life of an Indian Ārya; the ascetic order of life.

Sannyāsin=one who has renounced all worldly attachments and desires; an ascetic, a mendicant monk.

Śānti=tranquillity, peace; a prayer of peace; blissful peace of mind.

Sarga=creation; manifestation.

Śarīrin=the owner of the body; the in-dwelling ego-ised principle of consciousness; the soul.

Sarva-bhūta-hitē rataḥ=devoted to accomplish the good of all beings.

Sarvagata=that which has pervaded all things in the universe so as to be found in every one of them.

Sat=existence; that which exists.

Śatāvadhāna=the feat of multiple attention and memory directed to note one hundred things at one and the same time.

Sattva=that 'quality' of *prakṛiti* which is observable in the steady condition of balanced motion and calm conscious life.

Sattvaguṇa=the 'quality' of *sattva*.

Sāttvika=pertaining to or characterised by the *sattva-guṇa*.

Satya=true; truth.

Satyasaṅkalpatva=the power of making all, that one wills, come out true.

Śēsha=the ever remaining one; a mythical serpent.

Sēvā=service.

Siddhi=attainment of the end; acquisition of occult powers.

Siddhitraya=the name of a work by Yāmunāchārya in which he tries to prove the reality of God, of the soul and of experience.

Siṁhanāda=the lion's roar; roaring out like a lion in duels and battles for indicating a challenge or the feeling of triumph.

Ślōkas=stanzas; especially stanzas composed in that variety of the *anushṭup* metre which is called *ślōka*.

Smārta=relating to the *smṛitis;* religiously legal or legally religious.

Smṛiti=remembrance; memory, the internal mental impression which forms the basis of memory; a class of Hindu sacred writings dealing with their social, moral and political laws, so called because they are held to have been re-produced from memory by the ancient sages of India.

Śrauta-smārta=relating to the *Vēdas* or *Śrutis* and the *Smṛitis.*

Śrī-Pārthasārathi-svāmi-sabhā=the name of an association in Triplicane, Madras, which periodically holds meetings to hear lectures on religious subjects and to enjoy musical entertainments, often of a religious character; so named after God *Pārthasārathi*, that is, Kṛishṇa as the charioteer of Arjuna, worshipped in the Vishṇu temple at Triplicane.

Sṛishṭi=creation; manifestation.

Sthā=a root meaning to stay.

Sthāṇu=a pillar; that which is firm.

Sthitaprajña=the man of firm mind and established wisdom.

Sukha=pleasure, happiness.

Sukhāsana=a comfortable seat; a comfortable posture in sitting.

Śukla-yajurvēda=the *White Yajurvēda*, a name of the *Vājasanēya-samhitā* of the *Yajurvēda.*

Sukṛita=good deed; the impressed tendency due to good deeds.

Svabhāva=nature, natural impulse, instinct, one's own characteristic temperament.

Svarga=the celestial world of the Gods, the heaven of Indra and the other *Vēdic* Gods.

Svargārōhaṇaparvan=that book in the *Mahābhārata*, which treats of the ascent of the Pāṇḍavas to heaven.

Svayam-prakāśa=self-luminous.

T

Taittirīyōpanishad=one of the ten well known *Upanishads.*

Tamas=that 'quality' of matter which makes it dull, immobile and inert.

Tāmasa=pertaining to or characterised by the *tamō-guṇa.*

Tamō-guṇa=the quality of *tamas.*

Tanmātras=the subtle bases of the five *bhūtas* or elements of matter.

Tapas=the heat felt in consequence of self-restraint and internal effort; the practice of religious austerities.

Tapasvin=one who practises austerities; one who lives the unworldly life of austere penance and asceticism.

Tasmādyuddhyasva=do you therefore fight.

Tat=that; the *Brahman*.

Tatpara=that to which it relates.

Traiguṇya=the three *guṇas* or 'qualities' which are conceived to belong to the primordial matter known as *prakṛiti*.

Trailōkyarājya=the title to exercise kingly sway over the three worlds, the earth-world, the heaven-world and the intermediate world.

Trikaraṇas=the three instruments of work owned by the soul, *viz*., mind, language and body.

U

Upanishad=a class of *Vēdic* works which contain the fundamental thoughts and teachings of the ancient sages of India as bearing on Hindu religion, philosophy and metaphysics.

Upēkshā=conscious indifference.

V

Vaidikī=appertaining to the *Vēda*; that which relates to the religion that has no higher object of human pursuit than the attainment of power and enjoyments by performing *Vēdic* sacrifices.

Vairāgya=freedom from desire; dispassionate non-attachment; dispassionate disinterestedness.

Vaiśya=the third caste in the typical Hindu organisation of society; a member of the trading class; the common free man of the ancient Āryan community.

Vāk=speech; language.

Vākya-jñāna=sentence-knowledge; that kind of knowledge which is derived from a study of sentences; unrealised book-knowledge.

Vānaprastha=the forest-hermit; the person whose life is in the third stage, out of the four stages, in the legally ordered typical Hindu life.

Varṇadharma=duties appertaining to men and women of the various castes in respect of their particular castes.

Varṇa=colour, race, caste.

Varṇa-saṅkāra=the mixing up of colours; the mixing up of races through unwholesome inter-crossing between persons of different race-colour; the mixing up of castes by means of indiscriminate marriage.

Varṇāśrama-dharma=the duties, responsibilities and obligations attaching to the various castes and the various stages of life as promulgated in the Hindu sacred law.

Vaśin=one who has control over his senses; a person possessed of self-mastery.

Vēda=the main scripture of the Hindus, consisting of hymns in praise of Gods, sacrificial formulas, prayers, &c.

Vēdānta=the concluding portion of the *Vēda*; the *Upanishads*; the system of philosophy taught in the *Upanishads* as expounded by Bādarāyaṇa in the *Vēdānta-sūtras*.

Vēdāntin=a follower of the *Vēdānta* philosophy.

Vēdavādarata=the person who is given to indulge in discussions about the *Vēdas*.

Vibhu=all-pervading; lordly; the master-soul.

Vidvān=the learned man; the man of wisdom.

Vikāra=modification; change in configuration.

Vikarma=mis-work.

Vidhēyātman=one who is possessed of a duly disciplined self.

Vikshēpa=mental distraction caused by desire and aversion.

Vishṇu-purāṇa=one of the eighteen *Purāṇas*, attributed to Vyāsa.

Viśvarūpa=universal form; the universal form of God.

Vivēka=discrimination; discriminating power.

Vyakta=manifest.

Y

Yaj=a root meaning to worship.

Yajña=an act of worship, a sacrifice.

Yajantē=offer sacrifice or conduct worship.

Yajur-vēda=one of the four *Vēdas*, that which deals especially with the duties of the sacrificial priests called *adhvaryus*.

Yama=internal self-control, being one of the eight processes in the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration.

Yatayaḥ=ascetics; aspirants who possess the power of self-control; those who are devoted to divine worship with a view to attain salvation.

Yathā-kratu-nyāya=the law or principle which declares that the kind of religion and worship adopted by one here in this life invariably gives rise to an accordant realisation in the course of one's progress in religious thought and spiritual life hereafter.

Yati=a striving aspirant; an ascetic.

Yōga=practical application; concentration of the mind; the practice of mental concentration; the system of Hindu philosophy expounded by Patañjali; practice or practical application of a rule of conduct established by speculative or theoretical reasoning; a reasoned exposition; the acquisition of such good things and advantages as have not been yet obtained.

Yōgaḥ karmasu kauśalam=cleverness in relation to the performance of works is *yōga*.

Yoga-nidrā=meditative and contemplative repose; the sleep which is slept by the *yōgin* in his inwardly conscious state of *samādhi;* externally unconscious but internally wakeful sleep.

Yōga-nishṭhā=that position in the philosophy of conduct which is determined by the actual practice of work in life and society.

Yōgārūḍha=the man that has climbed up to *yōga*.

Yōga-samādhi=the state of extreme mental concentration brought about by the practice of *yōga;* concentrated realisation attained by the practice of the *yōga* of meditation and mental concentration.

Yōga-sūtras=that body of aphorisms by Patañjali which expounds the Yōga Philosophy.

Yōga-yajñāḥ=duty-doing sacrificers; those whose sacrifice consists in doing their duties aright in life.

Yōga-yukta=he who is engaged in the practice of *yōga* and has his attention concentrated; the unselfish worker.

Yōgin=one who has practised *yōga* and attained self-realisation in the state of *samādhi*.

Yukta=a person who is duly devoted to the performance of duty; the man of accomplished *yōga*.

Yuktatama=he who is the best among accomplished *yōgins*.

Yushmatprapañcha= your-world,' that is, the objective world.

ERRORS AND CORRECTIONS.

Most of the noteworthy errors and their corrections are pointed out below.

PAGE	LINE	FOR		READ.
3	9	*Taitirīyōpanishad*	...	*Taittirīyōpanishad*
...	11	तेजस्वि	...	तेजस्वि
4	24	mind	...	mind.
5	17	mentione	...	mentioned
9	3	divine. All	...	divine : all
14	15	Pāñchalās	...	Pāñchālas
...	23	काशि	...	काशी
...	25	युधाामन्युश्च	...	युधामन्युश्च
15	12	Sūtasoma	...	Sūtasōma
20	1	be	...	be,
21	27	their conch shells	...	their divine conch-shells
22	15	all these	...	(all these)
29	33	धार्तराष्ट्रान्:	...	धार्तराष्ट्रान्:
32	36	unwordly	...	unworldly
36	2	*yoga*	...	*yōga*
...	18	*Yōgasutras*	...	*Yōgasūtras*
38	22	Killing, them	...	Killing them,
40	36	familiar	...	familial
48	25	his recent Romanes	...	his Romanes
51	15	partiarchy	...	patriarchy
...	19	४६	...	४३
55	45	*Gita*	...	*Gītā*
56	8	*Mahābhāraṭa*	...	*Mahābhārata*
64	15	*dharma sammudha*	...	*dharma-sammūḍha*
68	18	*Mahabhārata*	...	*Mahābhārata*
...	22	*slōka*	...	*ślōka*
80	7	*dehātmavivēka*	...	*dēhātmavivēka*
86	17	nevertheless	...	nevertheless,

PAGE	LINE	FOR	READ.
88	14	intelligble	intelligible
95	25	धर्म्याद्धियुद्धा	धर्म्याद्धि युद्धा
108	28	योंगेत्विमां	योंगे त्विमां
112	3	simplicity.	simplicity,
126	20	*Sāṅkhyatattva-kaumudi*	*Sāṅkhya-kārikā*
138	31	*sāṅkhya*	*sāṅkhya*
140	25, 26, 28, 35	*samskāras*	*saṁskāras*
141	10, 15, 19	do.	do.
144	25	Tne	The
146	32	as	us
152	13	(food of sensations)	food (of sensations)
158	29 & 37	*samskāra*	*saṁskāra*
160	32	*vidheyātman*	*vidhēyātman*
161	15	*Yōga-sutras*	*Yōga-sūtras*
169	21	it banks	its banks
177	20	anwordly	unworldly
180	14	*samvāda*	*saṁvāda*
186	15	proceeding	preceding
190	30	trouble some	troublesome
205	30	*ātmaratiḥ*	*ātmaratiḥ*
213	17	illustrativ	illustrative
214	37	of pessimism	of the pessimism
220	15	readiiy	readily
222	28	time, to time	time to time,
223	27	*purṇakāmatva*	*pūrṇakāmatva*
227	16	bovhood	boyhood
230	1	in action	inaction
233	14	(selfishly to work, but).	(selfishly) to work, (but)
239	31	conductive	conducive
243		Arjuna	(Arjuna)

Page	Line	For		Read.
246	15	characteris d	...	characterised
254	19	also	...	also,
260	32	*asuyā*	...	*asūyā*
261	15	snd	...	and
262	1	he	...	the
275	4	Vaisyas	...	Vaiśyas
281	19	Śṛī-Krishṇa's	...	Śrī-Kṛishṇa's
285	16	food	...	food.
288	8	in	...	is
...	25	fed	...	fed,
294	2	therebv	...	thereby
296	3	descripton	...	description
301	17	Vedāntic	...	Vēdāntic
307	24	Srī-Kṛishṇa's	...	Śrī-Kṛishṇa's
318	30	Śri-Kṛishṇa	...	Śrī-Kṛishṇa
320	16	ad uty	...	a duty
324	16	bondage compelling	...	bondage-compelling
325	27	complusion	...	compulsion
329	20	*Viśvarupa*	...	*Viśvarūpa*
334	17	*pūrṇavātāra*	...	*pūrṇāvatāra*
338	36	contres	...	centres
343	34	unfufilled	...	unfulfilled
345	37	*Iśāvāsyōpanishad*	...	*Īśāvāsyōpanishad*
348	24	of ten make	...	often makes
...	25	*jñana-tapas*	...	*jñāna-tapas*
369	24	addition	...	addition,
376	7	homeland	...	home-land
383	35	remember we	...	remember how we
...	36	statement how that	...	statement that
393	36	salvation soul-emancipation	...	salvation of soul-emancipation
402	35	*gatiḥ*	...	*gatiḥ*
409	35	for the	...	for (the
412	13	श्रोत्रादीनीद्रियाण्यन्ये	...	श्रोत्रादीनीन्द्रियाण्यन्ये
416	35	*Yōga-yajñāḥ*	...	*Yōga-yajñāḥ*
430	35	thep ossibility	...	the possibility
438	15	capaple	...	capable

PAGE	LINE	FOR		READ.
440	10	care, to	...	care to
444	6	God realisation	...	God-realisation
445	36	pnending	...	unending
452	4	saves fro n	...	saves it from
...	10 & 11	(other superior world)	...	(other) superior (world)
...	21	two	...	two of
454	19	limted	...	limited
463	26	recognizes	...	takes note of
466	3	Srī-Krishṇa	...	Śrī-Kṛishṇa
470	1	*slōka*	...	*ślōka*
471	13	notably, a	...	notably a
473	5	this the	...	this, the
...	5	*sāṅkyha*	...	*sāṅkhya*
475	5	characteristies	...	characteristics
485	3	ittle	...	little
486	33	Śri-Kṛishna	...	Śrī-Kṛishṇa
488	20	*samskāra*	...	*saṁskāra*
489	34	ther	...	their
494	12	Tne	...	The
501	2	*i ness*	...	*i-ness*
507	10	With	...	with
509	15	self-realistion	...	self-realisation
511	14	qualifledly	...	qualifiedly
...	26	spritual	...	spiritual
518	13	God-attaiment	...	God-attainment
522	27	consquences	...	consequences
...	33	unsastisfiable	...	unsatisfiable
525	21	despritualise	...	despiritualise
529	8	instrinsic	...	intrinsic
...	23	*Brahma-bhūtaḥ*	...	*Brahma-bhūtaḥ*
531	4	*ṛishayaḥ*	...	*ṛishayaḥ*
533	35	othe	...	other
541	25	God-realisation.	...	God-realisation,
542	16	Śri-Kṛishna	...	Śrī-Kṛishṇa
545	5	*jñāna-yōgin*	...	*jñāna-yōgin*
549	15	*ratah*	...	*rataḥ*
...	31	*samsāra*	...	*saṁsāra*

PAGE	LINE	FOR		READ.
555	28	impossibiiities	...	impossibilities
558	9	*anushajjate*	...	*anushajjatē*
577	30	*dhyānaśloka*	...	*dhyānaślōka*
578	16	*śesha*	...	*śēsha*
...	17	*ādi-śesha*	...	*ādi-śēsha*
583	8	pecularity	...	peculiarity
590	20	*yōgīn's*	...	*yōgin's*
591	21	*ekāgratā*	...	*ēkāgratā*
604	12	insipration	...	inspiration
615	23	Externa	...	External
616	30	ह्यपपद्यते	...	ह्युपपद्यते
617	15	who	...	who,
623	35	लभन्ते	...	लभते
629	12	कर्मिभ्यश्वा	...	कर्मिभ्यश्चा

THE TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION FOR SANSKRIT AS USED IN THESE LECTURES.

अ	आ	इ	ई	उ	ऊ	ऋ	ॠ
a	ā	i	ī	u	ū	ṛi	ṛī
ऌ	ए	ऐ	ओ	औ	ं	:	
ḷi	ē	ai	ō	au	ṁ	ḥ	

क	ख	ग	घ	ङ
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ
च	छ	ज	झ	ञ
ch	chh	j	jh	ñ
ट	ठ	ड	ढ	ण
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ
त	थ	द	ध	न
t	th	d	dh	n
प	फ	ब	भ	म
p	ph	b	bh	m
	य	र	ल	व
	y	r	l	v
	श	ष	स	ह
	ś	sh	s	h